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Fresh décor ideas with a retro twist

# midcentury mod

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## MIDCENTURY MUST-HAVE

### 8 The Tulip Table

Eero Saarinen's versatile '50s design lives on in today's hottest homes.

## MAKERS

### 10 Retro Blend

Discover the bright, nostalgic glassware that defined midcentury outdoor entertaining.

## REDUX

### 14 Atomic Inspiration

Light up the night with the sleek pizzazz of these space-age chandeliers and lamps.

## RETRO REVIVAL

### 16 Sunny Side Up

A cheery remodel turned this 1950s kitchen into the best part of breakfast.



## ICONS

### 24 A Dynamite Design Duo

Get to know Charles and Ray Eames, a match made in furniture heaven.

## HUNT & GATHER

### 26 Front Door Flea Market

Vintage finds meet modern convenience with this clever online service.

## FINDERS KEEPERS

### 30 Housing the Modern Classic

Learn the ins and outs of snagging great deals on distinctive, timeless furnishings.

## HOUSE BLEND

### 40 The Green Haus

Expertly blurring the line between outdoor and indoor, this redesigned home stays friendly to both the environment and the midcentury.





## 52 The Bold and the Beautiful

Watch this designer revamp a rental with the use of two retro inspiration pieces.

## 62 Electric Bungalow

The owners of this oceanside dwelling defy Cape Cod expectations with their mod furnishings.

## 72 A Collected Approach

Make your home museum-quality by strategically grouping eye-catching collectibles.

## 84 Retro Remix

See how this kaleidoscope of thrift-shop finds, flea-market rescues and online bargains comes together as a modern-vintage heaven.

## 92 Indoor/Outdoor Living

This Mies van der Rohe-inspired house seamlessly blends nature's tranquility with midcentury flair.

## 104 Mix & Match

This Hamptons home gets the best of all worlds by bringing together carefully selected pieces from flea markets, eBay and everywhere else.

## DESIGN SCHOOL

### 34 Spice It Up

Get cooking on some bright ideas to bring midcentury style to your kitchen.

14

## 112 Small Wonders

Learn how modernist design fits limited-space abodes like a sleek, stylish glove.

## TIME TRAVELING

### 118 Sleek on the Sand

Take a peek at the life and designs of revolutionary, nature-loving architect Andrew Geller.

## DECORATE

### 122 Read All About It

Discover how to turn your vintage books into clever, charming décor.

## MAKE IT YOURS

### 130 The Fresh Approach

This spring, give your home new life by combining vintage and new pieces into a bouquet of dynamic design.

## SHOP

### 20 Shop Around

Check out our room-by-room guide to the best midcentury finds.

40

## 128 Resources

## EDITORIAL

### 6 Editor's Letter

COVER PHOTO BY SIMON WHITMORE/IDEAL HOME/TIME UK CONTENT



20

84

# Midcentury marvels

**AS HE WAS CONTEMPLATING THE NUANCES OF FURNITURE,** Charles Eames once said, "The details are not the details—they make the design." Long before I knew Eames' name, I found myself in a dusty thrift shop. Normally I'd thumb through old records, but this time, I was picking up a dresser. That's it. A casual chore for a broke college student. But the dresser I chose caught my eye with its simple conical legs, warm walnut wood and the unique design of the drawer faces. Each one was convex, with the slight curve up towards the top forming a lip. The bottom curve caught the light so that when you stepped back, the console looked like a neat grid—something that reminded me of the old LAX terminal, or perhaps the funky brickwork you would see on an old building. \$30 and it was mine.

Collecting this style of old things became a pastime, and before I could put a name on it, I was amassing a legitimate assemblage of what I would later discover was called Midcentury Modern furniture. And that's the inimitable allure of this style. It at once encompasses the patina of vintage, but wrapped up in a modern package that's exciting, fascinating and addicting. You can easily start to collect it not because it's Midcentury Modern, but because it's flat-out cool! And once you do learn about that era's rich history, you're even more hooked by the groundbreaking approach to design, its relationship with burgeoning technologies and the utterly before-their-time hipness of these design masters.

Midcentury fits seamlessly into today's trends. From organic to boho to cottage and coastal, midcentury is the jack-of-all-trades when it comes to outfitting your rooms; the little black dress that goes with anything for any occasion.

This issue of *Midcentury Mod* was created with many goals in mind. From giving you a peek into inspirational homes, to teaching you how to spot originals and preserve a true midcentury home, to touring projects by little-known architects of the time that deserve more attention. We give you the tips and tricks you need to know to score retro collectibles and decorate with mid-century finds in a modern way. It's a fun ride with a lot to learn and a lot to try.



JICKIE TORRES



# midcentury mod

SPRING 2015

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# COLOR me MODERN

BY JICKIE TORRES

RECREATE THIS HAPPY VIBE WITH A MIX OF BOLD COLORS, DIY TRICKS AND FLEA MARKET FINDS.



PHOTO BY SIMON WHITMORE/IDEAL HOME TIME UK CONTENT

WITH BRIGHT HUES, FRIENDLY FURNISHINGS AND LOTS OF CLEVER ACCESSORIES, this room is bound to put a smile on your face. How do you infuse this peppy style in your own home? It's easy when you combine whimsical touches, simple modern elements and fun projects that are easy enough for beginners. Here's how to get the look.

## Use Simple Silhouettes

The festive mix of elements in this room come together cohesively thanks to a clean foundation of Midcentury Modern shapes. From the simple wood-top coffee table with hairpin legs to the Danish-style loveseat with effortless curved arms, the key is to keep the big-ticket items in the room easy and straightforward. Not only does it set the midcentury tone of the room, it lets you combine other eras and styles with ease.

## Stick to a Color Combo

Turquoise and mustard are at once nostalgic and modern. Keep your design uncluttered by keeping all of your wares in the same color family. Then use plenty of white tones to balance out the strong shades and keep the room feeling airy.

## Make It Fun

Several unexpected elements bring up the mood of the room with their cheery motifs. The lacy bird wallpaper adds intricate detail while bringing the outdoors inside. The avian prints and vintage birdcage add to the theme without being too tongue-in-cheek, and the mix-and-match throw pillows add warmth and interest.

## Add Custom Touches

Update some basic finds to make the room yours. The simple Ikea armoire was updated with simple graphic wallpaper. Give a few white frames the dip-dye treatment for extra oomph.

# the tulip TABLE

BY JICKIE TORRES  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRET GUM  
STYLED BY JACQUELINE DEMONTRAVEL

EERO SAARINEN'S MASTERFUL DESIGN HAS NOT ONLY STOOD THE TEST OF TIME, IT'S BECOME A HOT COMMODITY IN TODAY'S INTERIORS. HERE'S WHY YOU NEED A TULIP TABLE OF YOUR OWN.

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WHEN EERO SAARINEN CREATED THE TULIP TABLE, THE DESIGN WAS IN STARK CONTRAST TO WHAT HE CALLED "THE SLUM OF LEGS." TO THE FINNISH-AMERICAN SAARINEN, A PIONEER IN MIDCENTURY MODERN DESIGNS AND AN ADVOCATE OF SLEEK, MODERN STYLING,

the mess of lines and the complicated shapes that occurred underneath the average American dining table was an "ugly, confusing, unrestful world." The pedestal collection that he introduced in 1958 was five years in the making. The award-winning series—which also included the Tulip chair—drew upon Eero's education in sculpture and his penchant for the neofuturistic style trending in the architectural world at the time.

This look included sweeping curves, strong arches and machine-like balance.

It's this same bold minimalism that makes the Tulip table at home in any décor today. The simple silhouette makes it a chameleon of a design, able to balance ornate interiors or bring dynamic detail to a sleek room.

The Tulip table is still produced today by Knoll, the same design house that manufactured it during the midcentury.



BY MERYL SCHOENBAUM  
PHOTOGRAPHED AND STYLED BY  
JICKIE TORRES

# retro BLEND0



THIS GLASSWARE  
IS A TOAST TO  
MIDCENTURY  
OUTDOOR  
ENTERTAINING.

#### WHITE BLEND0 TUMBLERS

combine effortlessly with modern partyware. Their simple shape and neutral color combine well with a range of styles, making them an entertaining workhorse.

If your good old days included a hula hoop, a Beetle and the Beatles—or you just wish you lived during those “mod” years—the images on these pages will make you smile and nod with nostalgia. You’ve likely seen these iconic serving pieces, but you may not know that the line is called “Blendo” and was manufactured during the 1950s and ‘60s by the West Virginia Glass Company.

Blendo glassware was a staple at summer barbecues during that era, with its cheerful “frosted” colors and sturdy feel. The color applied onto the glass gave the pieces heft. Modern-looking Blendo glassware reflected a time when rock music reigned and rockets raced to the moon.

“The style is characterized by a bright neon/pastel solid base that fades as it goes up the glass, along with a gold rim,” collector Mandy Heth says. Her Etsy shop, Vintage

Baubles N' Bits, houses Blendo sets of glassware in a rainbow of colors. Here she shares insight and advice on collecting Blendo pieces.

**HISTORY:**

The Blendo line reached the peak of its production in the 1950s and '60s. Blendo came in a wide variety of colors and sets: juice, water, lemonade and cocktail pitchers/glasses as well as servingware (salad bowls and dishes, chip-and-dip trays, oil and vinegar cruets, martini shakers and salt and pepper sets). The serving pieces were popular wedding gifts at the time. As the cocktail era (recreated these days on the TV series *Mad Men*) boomed, so did Blendo's sales.

**Blendo glassware was a staple at summer barbecues during the midcentury era, with its cheerful, "frosted" colors and sturdy feel. The color applied onto the glass gave the pieces heft.**

**BLENDΟ GLASSWARE** was manufactured in a rainbow of colors. The color was frosted on the outside and therefore susceptible to scratches. This set touts the common ombre effect where the color is denser at the bottom and fades towards the top. Some Blendo glass styles sported a center of clear glass with the opacity becoming thicker again at the top for a banded effect.



**MARKET APPEAL:**

Collectors who would be attracted to Blendo glassware include enthusiasts of Midcentury Modern, nostalgia, retro, vintage, color groups and glassware styles. These collectibles should be used and enjoyed rather than stored away for safekeeping. "They are really fun entertaining-ware even today," Mandy says.

**PRICING:**

Blendo ranks on the affordable side of collectibles. It's not hard to find pieces in the \$20 range, particularly on online auction sites. Intact gold rims—many of which wore off over the years because of frequent use—drive the value up.

**THIS LARGE CITRUS PUNCH BOWL**

makes a boho statement when paired with a modern tribal linen.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

BLENDΟ GLASSWARE FEATURES A GOLD RIM, WHICH DOES NOT APPEAR ON SIMILAR-STYLE REPRODUCTIONS.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MANDY HETH, VISIT HER ETSY  
SHOP AT [VINTAGEBAUBLESNBITS.ETSY.COM](http://VINTAGEBAUBLESNBITS.ETSY.COM).



**THE ROUND PITCHER** set is a Blendo Classic. Rarer versions include the Diamond style, which has a taller, more angled top, and the Pedestal pitcher, which features a small nipped base that expands into a wide, squat body.

# atomic INSPIRATION

BY SARAH JANE O'KEEFE

BRING A BURST OF SPACE-RACE STYLE EXCITEMENT TO YOUR HOME BY LIGHTING UP A SLEEK ICON'S REPRODUCTION.



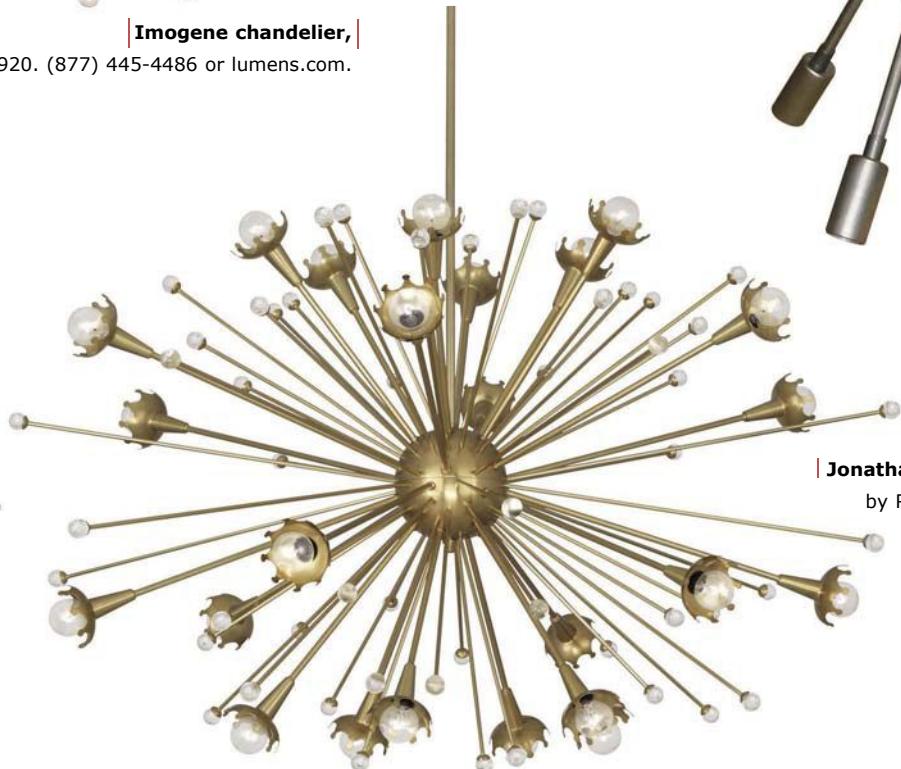
**Zanadoo chandelier in polished nickel,**  
\$1,920. (800) 440-5121 or [shopcandelabra.com](http://shopcandelabra.com).



**Raw steel Sputnik chandelier,**  
\$375. Visit [lucentlightshop.etsy.com](https://lucentlightshop.etsy.com).



**Imogene chandelier,**  
\$1,920. (877) 445-4486 or [lumens.com](https://lumens.com).



**Jonathan Adler sputnik chandelier**  
by Robert Abbey in antique brass,  
\$1,730. (800) 440-5121 or  
[shopcandelabra.com](https://shopcandelabra.com).



**Sputnik atomic wall light,**  
\$850. Visit [modernartifaxspitnik.etsy.com](https://modernartifaxspitnik.etsy.com).

# Sunny SIDE UP

BY CATHERINE TITUS FELIX  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK TANNER  
STYLED BY HILLARY BLACK



A DRASTIC 1950s-STYLE REWORK TURNED A DREARY KITCHEN INTO A HAPPY TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE.

A RETRO-STYLED but fully modern refrigerator by Big Chill fits well with the couple's refurbished vintage appliances.

**A**kitchen can evoke quite a wide range of emotions, from nostalgia to pride. That's certainly the case with Leslie and Joe Chavez's postwar-style kitchen. When they offer visitors a tour of their home, the Chavezes always make sure to save the kitchen for last. "People say 'ooh!' when they see it," Leslie says. An accomplished artist and teacher, she served as the creative force behind this space. "Visitors just kind of gasp and then they go down memory lane. I tend to think of it as just a kitchen, but they see their grandma's clock or mother's blender," she says. "It's really fun."

## WHAT TO TACKLE FIRST DURING A KITCHEN REMODEL

The kitchen had started out essentially uninhabitable. It had been redone in the 1970s with maroon vinyl flooring that was completely worn down by the time Joe and Leslie found it. The windows had all been painted shut and then covered over with dark curtains. The nailed-shut inside shutters wouldn't even allow a single ray of light to penetrate the gloomy space. The walls of the room had also been resurfaced with a  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch thick, brick-textured wall covering in an attempt to disguise the cracked plaster. However, there was nothing that could cover the cracked and crumbling ceiling.



**ALTHOUGH THE KITCHEN** needed a lot of TLC, the couple found out that the original '20s-era cabinets were still in place. Now meticulously restored, they lend a nostalgic and homey ambience. The wood windows were skillfully restored as well as the vintage Western-Holly range. A junk-store find, the range was dismantled, cleaned, re-chromed and re-insulated for maximum function.

On the plus side, the kitchen's original '20s cabinets remained in place. Once Leslie broke through the dirt and dark, she discovered that the cabinets had been painted pink inside and then covered with a swirly-patterned, gold and brown contact paper. The original tile counters had also survived, but someone had tiled over them. The window in the breakfast nook had been boarded up and covered with mirrors, while the saggy, rotted floor of the service porch barely had the energy to support the water heater sitting there.

#### PRESERVING THE PAST WITH MODERN CONVENiences

"Joe and I grew up in the '50s," Leslie explains, "and I just didn't want to live with a '20s-era kitchen."

"We wanted energy-efficient appliances, too," Joe adds. He had done research and discovered '50s-style refrigerators with modern insides from The Big Chill.

The intrepid couple coaxed all of the windows open, removing them from their sashes. Each window was then stripped, sanded, re-putted, primed and re-hung with sash ropes. Now the windows slide up

and down with ease. After pulling down the brick wall covering, Joe and Leslie found a craftsman who was able to restore their plaster walls. Leslie then selected a sunny yellow paint color, to brighten the once-gloomy space even more.

#### SIMPLE SALVAGE

They stripped and restored all of their vintage cabinets, afterwards treating them to a gleaming coat of white paint for added brightness. The countertops were retiled in yellow with black trim and red liner tiles. The installer laid the tile in a vintage style; some tiles are on the diamond, and some on the square.

"The guy who did the tiling for us had learned the trade from his dad, who had worked on some of these homes when they were new," Joe recalls.

#### INVEST IN A SHOWPIECE

Joe put true TLC into the 1950s Western-Holly stove that the two of them found in a junk store. "I tore it down to the ground, took every piece apart and had the chrome replated. There are hundreds of pieces in that stove."

Joe then replaced all of the stove's insulation and put it back together. "It works great," Leslie says. "It has a broiler oven along with a regular oven, and there are pull-out trays inside to catch debris from the burners. The trays have complete instructions for baking meats such as veal, liver and hamburgers, and desserts like angel food cake and white layer cake, imprinted on them."



**BEFORE:** The kitchen was muddled in a 1970s remodel with dark satin on the cabinets, painted-over windows and very little light entering the small room.



**THIS '50S ERA CHROME DINETTE SET** was a thrift shop score from more than 20 years ago. It looks right at home in the couple's breakfast nook.



#### DON'T FORGET THE FLOORS

Leslie and Joe had resolved to make their kitchen as bright as possible, and that included the floor. "We knew we wanted linoleum—it's much warmer than vinyl," Leslie says. "We also wanted a speckled look so the dirt wouldn't show. I wanted flashy so I picked three colors and did the stripes for added decorative value. We learned that there is more expertise required to lay linoleum than vinyl, but the installers we found really knew what they were doing."

#### ICING ON THE KITCHEN CAKE

Leslie had gleaned the Formica and chrome dinette set from a thrift store many years ago, and it was a natural fit for their fun breakfast nook. Joe took the set

apart, scrubbed it free of rust and then had it re-chromed.

Joe also combed swap meets, garage sales and antiques shops for the couple's collection of vintage kitchen clocks and small appliances, many of which required his careful touch to bring them back to working order. \*

**JOE SCOURS TAG SALES and junk**  
shops for any decorative and distinctive items he can restore. The wall in the breakfast nook has now turned into a showcase for a proud display of his vintage kitchen clocks.

#### WITH THE ORIGINAL IRONING BOARD GONE,

**GONE,** they use the narrow cabinet for spices. And the post-war wall phone works!



SEE RESOURCES, PAGE 128.

# Your room-by-room guide to the best midcentury finds.

BY CAITLIN HANSEN

PRODUCED BY JICKIE TORRES &amp; SARAH JANE O'KEEFE

## [BEDROOM]



Eliot Daybed in Key Largo Grass, \$1,499. (888) 282-0842 or joybird.com.



Triangles Charcoal and Gold wallpaper, \$125 per single roll. (415) 318-6412 or hyggeandwest.com.



Worlds Away Hudson Chest in white/gold, \$2,660. (800) 440-5121 or shopcandelabra.com.



Aviary duvet cover, \$199. (877) 993-9355 or dwellstudio.com.



Tangle copper and glass vase, \$87. Visit scandinaviandesigncenter.com.



Teton Goldenrod pillow, \$100. Visit burrowandhive.com.



Woodrow full bed in walnut, \$1,400. Visit bludot.com.

# [DINING ROOM]



Global views sunburst light fixture in nickel, \$697. Visit [shopcandelabra.com](http://shopcandelabra.com).



Sornin Dining Table, \$2,625. Visit [overstock.com](http://overstock.com).



Herman Miller ® Eames DSW molded plastic side chair with dowel-leg base, \$499. Visit [wayfair.com](http://wayfair.com).



Owl plate set, \$44.99. Visit [modcloth.com](http://modcloth.com).



Thunderbird placemats, \$70 for 4. Visit [luluandgeorgia.com](http://luluandgeorgia.com).



Rocket cocktail shaker, \$34.99. Visit [modcloth.com](http://modcloth.com).

French paddle in walnut, \$92. Visit [koromiko.com](http://koromiko.com).



# [LIVING ROOM]



Lava lamp throw pillow, \$39.95.  
Visit [pillowdecor.com](http://pillowdecor.com).



Geometric clock, \$80.75. Visit [sarahmimoclocks.etsy.com](http://sarahmimoclocks.etsy.com).



Store sofa bed in gray, \$1,299. Visit [nyfu.com](http://nyfu.com).



Nel Lusso coco vase, \$24.95. Visit [nellusso.com](http://nellusso.com).



Path to the Beach by Kristi Cumming, \$132.  
Visit [islandla.etsy.com](http://islandla.etsy.com).



Washed wood and metal coffee table, \$490.  
Visit [tuvaluhome.com](http://tuvaluhome.com).



Matte brass tray, \$70. Visit [theknewnew.com](http://theknewnew.com).

Ash wood chair, \$205.  
Visit [franceandson.com](http://franceandson.com).



# [KITCHEN]



Retro wall clock in green, \$32.99. (888) 242-6633 or retroplanet.com.



Bulbo tea kettle, \$124. Visit wayfair.com.

Ceramic Starburst trivet, \$42. Visit greerchicago.com.



Northstar retro range in Buttercup Yellow or Mint Green, \$3,995 - \$4,495. (877) 866-1245 or elmirastoveworks.com.



Bulrushes and Swans art tiles, \$32 each. Visit xenialaler.com.



The Middleton plate set, \$24. Visit poketo.com.



Big Chill retro refrigerator in Orange, \$2,995. (877) 842-3269 or bigchill.com.

# A dynamite DESIGN DUO

BY VICTORIA VAN VLEAR

THIS CREATIVE COUPLE DIDN'T JUST DESIGN FURNITURE—THEY DESIGNED AN ERA.

**CHARLES AND RAY EAMES** cemented themselves as one of the cornerstones of mid-century design. Devotees still drool over their pieces and designers still study their craft. The couple didn't just contribute to midcentury design—they shaped it. Their goal was to create for the masses and provide efficient, easy pieces regular people could use in everyday life. Their ideas moved America away from bulky, expensive pieces to a more streamlined, minimalist look.

The Eameses have left a legacy of influence on modern design and art. Check out some little-known facts that may change the way you see their work.

**THE ORIGINAL DESIGN** of the Eames house dominated the 1.4-acre property, but by the time building supplies arrived, the Eames had explored the land and changed the design so that it would obtrude less on the landscape.

**NOT ONLY DID CHARLES AND RAY** design architecture and furniture, but fabric and even toys such as the House of Cards (1952) and the Solar Toy (1957).



PHOTO BY VAN SHADICK



## SOME INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THIS DESIGN DREAM TEAM:

Charles and Ray met at the Cranbrook Academy of Art in 1940, where they were both studying design specialties after completing their undergraduate degrees. They were married the following year.

Charles' designs were influenced by Eieli Saarinen, a Finnish architect who specialized in Art Deco. The legendary Eieli designed the National Museum of Finland, among other buildings.

When Eames designs first came onto the market, only Charles received credit. However, Ray was an integral part of the team. She designed almost all of the fabrics, and contributed to many of Eames' other designs.

Ray began her career as a painter, but as her husband became more famous in the design world, she switched over to creating fabrics, furniture and clothing. Yet she still identified herself as a painter, saying, "I never gave up painting, I just changed my palette." This was a prime early example of an artist working with mixed mediums—Ray painted on fabric and through the curves of clothing. Many modern artists took her cue and now experiment with a variety of materials.

"Eames House," the Los Angeles home that the couple designed for themselves, is still a shrine of modern architecture. The designs were part of the "Case Study House" program by *Arts & Architecture Magazine*. The publication commissioned famous architects to design efficient model homes for the residential housing boom happening in the U.S. The Eameses built an entire house from steel parts in fabricators' catalogs.

Charles and Ray also found other types of art intriguing, such as photography and film. They produced several short films, including *Powers of Ten* and *Toccata for Toy Trains*, which they used to document their ideas and experiment with everything from collecting toys to documenting cultural artifacts from their travels.

# front door FLEA MARKET

WRITTEN BY VICTORIA VAN VLEAR

PHOTOGRAPHY BY TK

BRING THE FLEA MARKET TO YOUR HOME

WITH THIS CLEVER ONLINE SERVICE.



## MAYBE YOU LOVE THE MIDCENTURY LOOK,

but you don't have time to hunt out authentic treasures at all of the antique stores in town. Or perhaps you aren't confident in your own ability to find items that fit the theme. Don't give up on your décor dreams. Instead, meet Frankie & Albert, an online subscription service that can send beautiful vintage finds straight to your front door.

Here's how it works: First, you'll fill out a quick survey that will help Frankie & Albert get a feel for your tastes. You'll tell them your favorite styles (Midcentury Modern is one of the options), the colors you don't like and the kinds of accessories you want, such as kitchen or bathroom

accessories. Subscriptions for the service start at \$50 for a single month, and the rate decreases if you sign up for three or six months.

After you subscribe, Frankie & Albert will customize a box of goodies and send it to you in the mail. They hand-pick all of their items, so you know you'll get a treasure. If you don't like what you receive or already have a similar piece, don't worry. Log on to the digital swap meet and type in the item number. Frankie & Albert will post the item, and you can trade with other members for a piece that will hit the mark.





## Get your Shop On

CHECK OUT THESE ONLINE SHOPPING DESTINATIONS THAT BRING THE FLEA MARKET HOME.

- [onekingslane.com](http://onekingslane.com)
- [redlinevintage.com](http://redlinevintage.com)
- [jaysonhome.com](http://jaysonhome.com)
- [1stdibs.com](http://1stdibs.com)
- [midcenturymodernfinds.com](http://midcenturymodernfinds.com)
- [sunbeamvintage.com](http://sunbeamvintage.com)
- [midcenturymobler.com](http://midcenturymobler.com)
- [chairish.com](http://chairish.com)



# Retro Magic

LOOK FOR THESE CLASSIC PIECES THAT WILL IMMEDIATELY TRANSPORT VISITORS TO THE PAST.

**KITCHEN.** Bring the diner feel into your home with a theme of red or aqua. Add checkers in accents such as cloth napkins and seat covers. Keep a lookout for starburst patterns, and try a vintage kitchen scale or timer.

**LIVING ROOM.** Mustard, avocado and orange make for an instant midcentury color scheme. Pair these with dark wood and gold accents. Look for bold patterns in items such as accent pillows and table lamps, and hang a starburst mirror on the wall.

**DINING ROOM.** The 1960s saw patterns with bright flowers and bold shapes. For an overall effect in the dining room, try a chandelier with an atomic look. Or score a work of bronze wall art popular at the time to hang above your credenza. Use vintage water glasses with gold trim and tinted-glass serving dishes.

**BEDROOM.** Try an alarm clock with large blocked numbers, or an old rotary phone. You can connect it to your landline, or buy one that will hook up to your cell phone. Mount a vintage poster that advertises your favorite retro band or TV show.

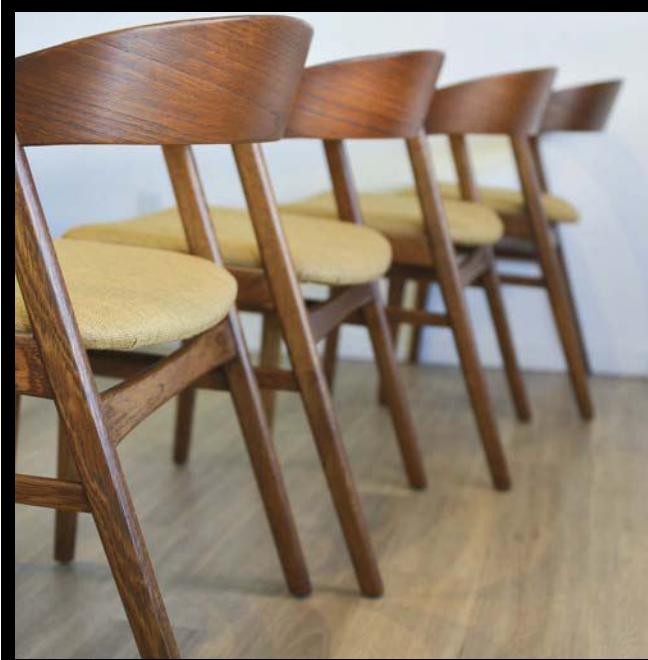


# house the MODERN CLASSIC

BY SARAH JANE O'KEEFE

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SHELLY HAYWOOD

THERE'S NOTHING WORSE THAN THE PIECE THAT GOT AWAY. DISCOVER HOW TO TRACK DOWN TRUE MIDCENTURY ORIGINALS, ASSESS PRICING AND SNATCH UP THE RIGHT VINTAGE FINDS FOR YOU.



## CLEAN LINES, GORGEOUS WOOD AND ICONIC STYLING—MIDCENTURY FURNISHINGS HAVE IT ALL.

Finding that perfect piece to complete a room or add a jolt of throwback-era design can be a long and arduous search, unless you know where to start. Shelly Haywood and Lisa Cameron of The Modern Vault are passionate about authentic midcentury pieces, and they stock their Newport Beach, California, store with beautifully refinished charmers.

Shelly first opened shop in September 2013 as a photography business, but when customers began expressing interest in the furnishings of her studio, she decided to switch gears. Not long after this she met Lisa, who had been selling midcentury pieces out of her home for years. They became partners and quickly expanded The Modern Vault to have its own website and Etsy shop.

The duo searches for quality, original pieces and work with professionals to refinish, upholster and give new life to their unique finds. They also work with customers to style or stage their homes with midcentury flair. Looking for tips on scoring pro deals? Follow their advice:

### 1. Start from the Heart

"The best thing about Midcentury Modern is that if you buy what you love you'll never be disappointed," Lisa says. Shelly agrees, adding, "We don't buy for a name—we buy for what we like." So far this mindset has worked well for the shop. Smaller items in their inventory like pottery, cameras, clocks and candlesticks show their panache for finding personality-filled items that their customers love.

### 2. The Real Deal Feel

The Modern Vault does not sell any reproductions. Before they buy, Shelly and Lisa pay close attention to the quality of a piece. "The workmanship of an original is unmistakable and difficult to recreate," Lisa says. When it comes to figuring out the maker of a piece, even these experts know it to be a tough task. "It can be difficult so you really just have to know, especially when a piece is not marked," Shelly says.



If your wish list includes having a design from a specific maker, it may be best to look for a piece that has a stamp of authenticity.

Quality, the materials used and the credibility of the seller are all vital aspects in discerning the true value of a find. While some authentic pieces are made with veneer, they will always be hardwood beneath. And while Shelly and Lisa note that knockoffs can often be purchased for much less, the price tag will reflect the quality.

### 3. It's Your Décor that Matters

Ultimately, let your interiors dictate your decisions. "No one can know everything about the makers," Lisa says. What you *can* know is how a piece suits your style, and how you can use that knowledge to give a modern classic a modern home.

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## Know Your Wood

Most midcentury pieces are crafted from durable, high-quality woods—which lends to their ability to stand the test of time with such incredible beauty. Get to know the main stars of your favorite midcentury furnishings:

**Walnut**

**Mahogany**

**Rosewood**

Need another reason to snap up a modern classic? These vintage pieces are likely your best chance of enjoying the rich, unique wood tones. Cost now prohibits many current manufacturers from using walnut or mahogany, and rosewood can no longer be harvested. Experts advise that if you can find a great piece in walnut—buy it.



FOR MORE ON THE MODERN VAULT, VISIT  
[THEMODERNVAULT.COM](http://THEMODERNVAULT.COM) OR [THEMODERNVAULT.ETSY.COM](http://THEMODERNVAULT.ETSY.COM).

# How to shop like a PRO

BUYER TIPS TO SCORE THAT PERFECT FIND SURE TO LAST A LIFETIME.

When you're shopping for a midcentury piece, Lisa recommends doing your homework. Here are some tips to jumpstart your search:

Check out completed sales on eBay. Seeing how much money similar pieces are currently fetching can help you budget and discern what might make an item worth more or less.

Educate yourself on what you like. Maker's marks aside, what do you like? Are you a fan of a platform base or a sucker for a tapered leg? Define your taste to ensure you wind up with what you'll love. "Spend time in stores with great pieces and eventually you'll know what you like and want," Lisa says.

"We always tell people, 'Nothing is worse than the piece that got away,'" Shelly says. The shop owners encourage snapping up that one-of-a-kind find that suits you perfectly, because you really don't know if you'll ever see it again.





PHOTO BY OLIVER KONIG

## Say It with Accessories

JENNIFER JOHNSON, ID HAWAII  
[IDHAWAII.COM](http://IDHAWAII.COM)

Interior designer Jennifer Johnson knows that you don't need midcentury architecture to create the right feel. Instead, you can make any space midcentury by adding in the right accessories. This kitchen starts with a minimal palette of white and navy blue—a perfect backdrop for mod magic. The bar stools contribute to the feel with their straight lines, hairpin legs and wood seats. The minimalist white side table's color blends well

with the walls, helping it to feel more like a built-in piece than an added accessory. The plastic of the white chair also adds to the modern vibe.

**Expert Tip:** For the most impact, invest into bigger items to infuse a midcentury feel. Choosing '50s-era chairs or barstools will pack a bigger punch in the room than small dishes and accessories.



# SPICE IT UP

BY VICTORIA VAN VLEAR

ADD SOME MIDCENTURY FLAIR TO YOUR KITCHEN WITH THESE DESIGN IDEAS.

THE MIDDLE OF THE 20TH CENTURY WAS  
THE AGE OF FAMILY DINNERS,

with the kitchen serving as both an important workspace and a living area. You can add your own personality to the midcentury era by incorporating a classic design into your home. Try these tips for the ultimate retro kitchen:



## Midcentury Heat

BRETT MINK, THE HOUSE OF MINK  
[THEHOUSEOFMINK.COM](http://THEHOUSEOFMINK.COM)

This midcentury kitchen looks out onto the hot landscape of Palm Springs, California. "The walls of glass and the 11-foot ceiling provide an indoor and outdoor experience of the light," designer Bruce Mink says. The white walls enhance the natural airy feel and afford visitors a clear view of the desert.

**Expert Tip:** "Add as many windows and as much lighting as possible," Bruce says. He also advises clean lines for kitchen appliances. Formica and Corian offer laminate countertops that keep the space looking smooth and streamlined. "Give cabinets a smooth front with clean lines," he says. "For the stove vent, I prefer a downdraft range so no hood vent obscures the open feel of the kitchen." As for the color scheme, Bruce advises to stay within the mid-century color wheel—avocado, orange and olive—or go with a neutral palette. "Dark brown espresso and white offer the handsome clean appeal of midcentury design."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANDREW WOOD

## Electric Retro

SARAH GALLOP DESIGN, INC.

[SARAHGALLOP.COM](http://SARAHGALLOP.COM)

"I love that we were able to incorporate some of the original features of the home," designer Sarah Gallop says. "We kept the wood paneling, but we updated other areas in a way that respected the period and architecture of the home while still feeling current and fun. In the kitchen, the owners were open to introducing some color and playing with material placement, which really makes the space inviting."

**Expert Tip:** "It's important to consider the overall function of the space and then apply an aesthetic that fits with the architecture of the home," she says. "Research the period that you're considering and then decide on the features you like and dislike. You don't have to incorporate everything from that time period. It's about mixing new and old and taking some chances." It may seem like a big project, but she encourages first-timers not to worry. "If you feel overwhelmed, you can always hire a professional," she says.





PHOTO BY KARYN R. MILLET



## Simple Vibrancy

GREG CRAWFORD, BILDEN CORP.

[BILDENCORP.COM](http://BILDENCORP.COM)

In this classy kitchen, the dominant feature is actually the neutral color, which gives the room a bright feel. "I love the quality of light," designer Greg Crawford says. "It comes from four different locations and adds to the feeling of balance and harmony that pervades this room and the adjacent spaces." Light not only gives beauty, but also practicality—especially in the kitchen.

**Expert Tip:** When designing your own space, Greg suggests you "keep it simple with authentic, natural materials. Connect to the exterior of the house through the windows, lighting and colors, and use as much natural light as possible." He also suggests a restrained color scheme. If you like bright pops of color, use a neutral palette as a backdrop for fresh fruit and flowers.

## Clean and Classic

ALETHA VanderMass, TRUE HOME RESTORATIONS

[TRUEHOMERESTORATIONS.COM](http://TRUEHOMERESTORATIONS.COM)

"The original metal kitchen cabinets were torn out in the 1990s, so we did our best to stay true to what once existed," designer Aletha VanderMass says. "Since metal was out of the budget, we kept the custom wood cabinet fronts completely flat. We added small, sleek pulls in chrome as a nod to the original kitchen. The beams and tongue and groove ceiling helped the midcentury feel too."

**Expert Tip:** For your own home, "keep finishes simple and appliances built-in as much as possible," Aletha suggests. "If you have a dishwasher, put a panel on the front of it so it blends in with your cabinets." She also says to avoid too many knick-knacks or collectibles. "Visual clutter and kitsch doesn't belong in a Midcentury Modern kitchen."



# THE GREEN

WITH ECO-CONSCIOUS DESIGN AND VINTAGE FURNISHINGS, THIS HOME USES MODERN IDEAS TO PRESERVE THE PAST.

BY MANDY ALLEN/BUREAUX  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY GREG COX/BUREAUX  
PRODUCED BY SVEN ALBERDING/BUREAUX

# HAUS

**GREEN AND SERENE.** Sliding doors make the indoor-outdoor flow seamlessly, and when opened, they transform the porch, living room and enclosed anterior courtyard into a singular airy space. The amber-colored lamp was originally a blown-glass vessel that Jo had wired to use as a light. The low-slung sofa is upholstered in Jo's signature color—green—and handsomely holds its own with her midcentury furniture.

Vintage fabrics from the '50s through the '70s have been repurposed as cushion covers and other upholstery.

# M

HEN YOU DO AS THE  
NATIVES DO IN THE WORLD  
OF DESIGN,

you take your  
cues from your natural

surroundings. This sustainably built architectural family home offers an idyllic inside-outside type of experience for its occupants: fashion designer (as well as former model and magazine editor) Jo Springthorpe, her husband Jeff Liss and their son, Oscar. Bringing to one's mind a contemporary glass-box treehouse, the structure by architect Antonio Zaninovic is deceptively spacious and wonderfully liveable with its masterful mix of original Midcentury Modern furnishings, vintage textiles and fabrics, South African artwork and natural materials.

## Inside Out Living

When Jo and Jeff packed up their old Victorian and moved into this single-level, two-bedroom 1950s cottage situated in lush ravine at the foot of a mountain, they were in love with the locale. The interior, on the other hand, was in their words "mostly liveable."

The couple primarily needed more space, which Antonio helped give them—along with the added bonus of an easy modern interior that showcased the incredible landscape of the area. "We loved the way Antonio saw the property's position through fresh eyes," Jo says of their first discussion. "He told us that if he were to recreate the house, he would always follow one basic objective: to connect each space to its surroundings."

Sliding glass doors, when open, transform the generously sized veranda, living room and enclosed anterior courtyard



**GLASS HOUSE.** The corner of the cantilevered room shows just how important of a role the landscape plays in the look of the interior. Jo has curated a large collection of iconic Midcentury Modern furniture, such as this classic Overman pod chair.

**THE CONCRETE BENCH** that projects from the built-in barbecue extends all the way through inside the living room and outside again to an enclosed courtyard. Cane furniture is a favorite of Jo's, and these designs were copies of original '70s chairs.



Thanks to her mix of finds from several eras and styles, the home's décor feels fresh and personal. "I love furniture from most periods, but particularly Midcentury Modern through to the '70s, especially Swedish and Danish pieces."



**STONE STRONG.** Concrete is a predominant material in the design, as seen in the suspended concrete feature staircase and the floors. The minimalist space gives a gallery-like appeal to the vintage Danish chairs, vintage blanket chest and portrait. Jo and Antonio designed the low-level wooden side table themselves, as part of a limited-edition furniture collection.



**OLD MEETS NEW.** The cantilevered glass extension in the kitchen is Jo's favorite spot to curl up with a book or take meetings. The vintage Finn Juhl-style dining chairs were reupholstered in a mossy velvet fabric, while the turned-leg yellowwood dining table belonged to Jo's parents. The light over the table reveals Jo's love of Danish design. The reading lamp belonged to her grandmother, and she couldn't resist adding the green nesting tables.



**ECO CHIC.** The kiaat wood cabinets lend the house organic warmth—the beautiful, distinctive grain provides all of the embellishment the kitchen needs. The cabinets add complementary contrast and character to the industrial stainless steel cooker and utilitarian concrete floors. And as always, Jo's signature pops of green add the finishing touch.

into a singular airy space. A concrete bench cuts through this section of their house, running the length of the main wall from the outside porch into the living room and then outside again to the courtyard. Long, narrow upper windows have been cut out of the walls in the living room as well as upstairs master bedroom, highlighting awe-inspiring snapshots of greenery and beckoning in additional natural light.

## Sensitive Design

Antonio implemented energy-efficient architecture that takes its cues from the landscape rather than imposing structures upon it; he did this by using understated materials (with a particular emphasis on concrete), cantilevers, overhangs and as much glass as practicality will permit. The new structure is truly breathtaking: A type of habitat that—though grounded—seems to float in the canopy of trees enclosing it.



**SIMPLE BASICS.** Jo chose a neutral gray for the oversized sectional so that it would be flexible for their décor. The vintage coffee table gives a pop of personality to this simple space.



#### **MODERN UTILITY.** The reading room-meets-study-meets-quiet work

space is at the top of the landing and forms the central anchor around which Jo and Jeff's bedroom, Oscar's bedroom and Jeff's studio converge. The classic white bookshelves prove that simple organization is best.

**MULTITASKING ROOMS.** Jeff's studio (that sometimes doubles as a guest bedroom) seems to float in the treetops; wooden exterior sliding screens can also be closed, should privacy be needed. The Anglepoise-style lamp has been put on wheels for painterly practicality.



He built the remodel on the original footprint to ensure the grounds were largely untouched, though now the home abounds with space, light and volume. The new floor plan functions on two levels: the ground level entrance, living and kitchen areas, and the upstairs quarters incorporating three bedrooms, bathrooms and an open-plan reading and TV room. A sunken third level encompasses a native shrub garden and a gleaming lap pool.

#### **Smart Choices that Pay Off**

Some decisions were not only green choices, but also budget conscious. "Reinforced concrete, brick, plaster and glass are all relatively affordable and also widely available," Antonio explains. "We also reused as much as possible, such as timber trusses from the old cottage that form a rustic feature wall on the front of the house and pool area, and the stone wall backing the pool we clad in granite that was excavated on site."

Jeff and Antonio also studied the path of the sun to reduce the need for artificial light. "In addition, we introduced natural passive systems, such as cross-ventilation, cantilevers for shade, and buried spaces at pool level that keep temperatures cool in summer," Antonio says.

"The garden is also water wise and fully indigenous," Jo explains. "All of the floors upstairs are made of bamboo, and hardly any of our furniture or textiles are new."

## Vintage All the Way

Jo's eclectic mix of Midcentury Modern furnishings, vintage '50s/'60s/'70s textiles and classical South African landscape paintings turned out to complement rather than clash with the structured silhouettes of the contemporary architecture. "I love how her choice of fabrics softens the architecture," Antonio says. "And how the interesting pieces she has found add a unique soul to the house."

As Jo explains it, "When I travelled the world modeling and then as a fashion editor, it wasn't the clothing boutiques that drew me in, but rather the markets and junk stores and vintage furniture shops."

Thanks to her mix of finds from several eras and styles, the home's décor feels fresh and personal. "I love furniture from most periods but particularly Midcentury Modern through to the '70s, especially Swedish and Danish pieces," she says. "And I've obsessively collected textiles from the '50s, '60s and '70s that were all packed away until the house was finished."

Those textiles—with prints ranging from psychadelic to nature-inspired—have now taken new life as cushion covers and various upholstery for the furniture, with all of their eclectic patterns linked together by Jo's adoration for green (that also appears in an over-dyed Iranian rug and materials like the mosaic feature wall in Oscar's bathroom). "What can I say?" Jo laughs. "I have a thing for green. It's clearly not enough for me to just have it at my doorstep!" ★

SEE RESOURCES, PAGE 128.



**SPA APPEAL.** The master bathroom features classic penny tiles, inspired by old-school New York eateries. A custom steel and glass vanity unit boasts a white marble slab top. The bathroom mirror reflects the forest outside as seen through the upper window, enhancing the sensation of being in the treetops even while bathing.



**Long, narrow upper windows** were cut out of the walls in the living room as well as upstairs master bedroom, highlighting awe-inspiring snapshots of greenery while beckoning in additional natural light.



**SURREAL STYLE.** A feature wall bridges the gap between the entrance and the beginning of the living area, bathed in a mud gray paint. The chair is a Danish design and the paintings are all originals from Walter Meyer—one of South Africa's most celebrated landscape artists.



**A SIMPLE HAVEN.** The custom dressers are kiaat and white lacquered wood. Just as in the living room, the wall here features upper windows, affording the couple privacy while at the same time framing views of the treetops and accentuating the treehouse feel. The simple color palette feels subdued and calm.





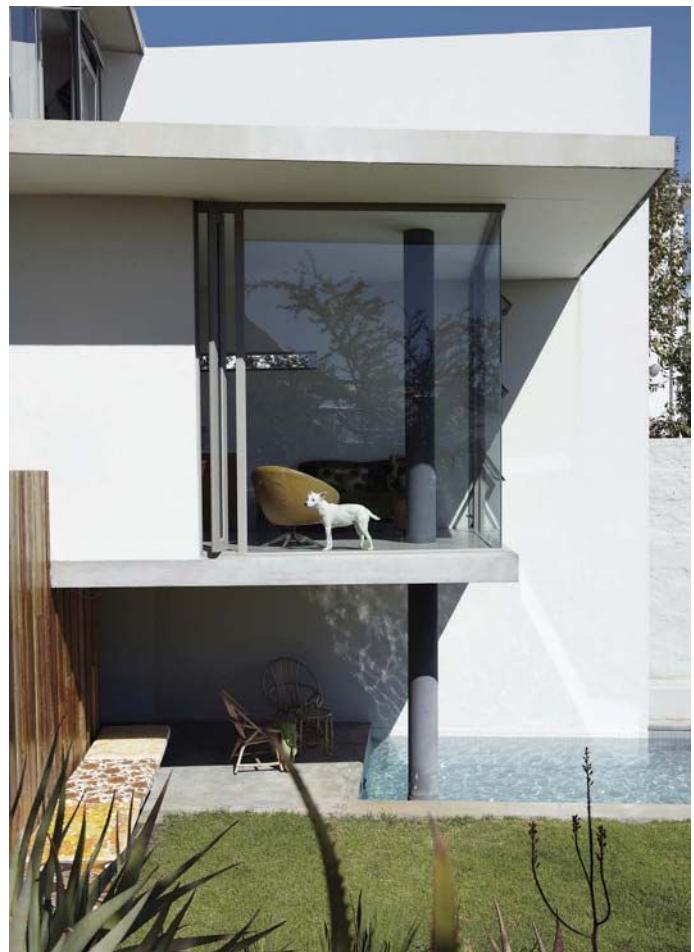
**When open, the sliding glass doors transform the generously proportioned veranda, living room and enclosed anterior courtyard into a singular airy space.**

**Compare and Contrast.** Concrete is a prominent material in the design of the home and makes appearances both inside and outside.

**The Locals.** The garden is made up of indigenous, sun-loving and waterwise plants. The owners had the rocks removed from the main site during the renovation and relocated to form part of the landscaping.



**Made in the Shade.** The garden and pool area form an unofficial third level. A bench has been incorporated into the wall to provide added seating at the pool area, with foam mattresses covered in Jo's vintage textiles for comfort. The cantilevered design (essentially a glass cube) over a section of the pool provides shady respite; organic elements further connect the home to its environment, including the rough-hewn sandstone feature wall in the pool area, made from stone that was excavated on site during the renovation process. Behind a section of the wooden wall is a small poolroom with a shower and bathroom. Jo adores cane furniture, and the chairs here are original '70s finds.



## MIDCENTURY ORIGINS.

The Jim Dine painting over the fireplace and the black Eames lounge chair were the iconic midcentury pieces that inspired the rest of the décor.



# THE BOLD & the beautiful

WRITTEN BY VICTORIA VAN VLEAR  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY COURTNEY APPLE  
STYLED BY NAOMI STEIN

DECORATING A RENTAL? THE RICH FLAVOR AND BOLD LINES OF MIDCENTURY DÉCOR PROVIDE THIS FATHER AND HIS SONS WITH AN IDEAL BACKDROP.



# H

OW DO YOU MAKE A HOUSE FEEL WARM, MASCULINE AND PERSONAL AT ONCE?

Naomi Stein faced this challenge when she designed the downstairs interior for a father and his two sons. The neighborhood of Bala Cynwyd, tucked away up in the suburbs of Philadelphia, boasts beautiful homes and manors that are over a century old. Aged maple and cherry trees line the streets and provide shade and color for the residents. It's a perfect place to set up a bachelor pad.

## Working with Limits

Naomi began by tackling the challenges presented by the home's limitations as a rental. "I had to figure out how to make the place personal without making a lot of changes to the home itself," she says. Since she couldn't do any remodeling, she decided to focus on the interior design instead. "I didn't even look at the potentials for remodeling. I knew the house's limitations at the outset, and I worked around them."

For her first change, she painted the walls. The original colors were beige and robin-egg blue. "The colors didn't work well together, and they looked terrible in the house," Naomi says. The owners of the home allowed her to paint, so she gave the walls a fresh start with pure white. However, she also wanted to paint one of the living room walls black, which required



**"Because I kept the furniture so clean, I could do bold accent pieces. Most of the color and pattern comes in through the accents."**

**GOLD ACCENTS.** The beautiful wood sideboard is a coveted midcentury piece from Broyhill Brasilia. The gold handles on the drawers complement the gold accents on the vintage blue lamps and round mirror.

**MARBLED COFFEE.** In this custom coffee table, three very different materials work together: wood, metal and marble. The unusual piece immediately catches the eye, even against the bright rug that vies for attention.



**“The goal was to choose great classic pieces that would work in any home, and then pair them with mixed accents. It gives the home a more eclectic feel.”**



# GET THE LOOK

USE THESE TIPS TO CREATE YOUR OWN ECLECTIC MIDCENTURY SPACE.



**START WITH A NEUTRAL PALETTE.** On the walls and in the furniture, use neutral colors such as brown, black, beige, cream and white. Add texture through different materials such as leather, wood and metal.

**BE INSPIRED.** Do you have an accent piece that you love? Use that piece to build the rest of your décor. If you're starting from scratch, first go window shopping. Find a few central items that command your attention and start from there.

**ADD POPS OF COLOR.** With a rug, a painting, a lamp or even an easy chair, create accents of color to offset the neutral background. Too much color can overwhelm the eye, but layered accents will create interesting focal points.

**MIX AND MATCH.** Don't use pieces that are all modern or all vintage. Instead, mix up your style in unexpected ways. You can do this with color, style or material. If you have a lot of wood, add some soft fabric or clean steel. If your palette is muted or pastel, add one or two bright pieces.

**EAMES STYLE.** To complement the Eames lounge chair, Naomi found these dining room chairs, which were designed by the Eameses for Herman Miller.





**When Naomi begins a project, she often lets one or two pieces guide the overall style. "It's usually a textile or art," she says. "It all comes back to that inspiration piece." Once the area has a place to start, decorating from scratch becomes less daunting.**

her client to get further permission from the owners. Black is a bold move, but it gives the room a rich feel and contrasts with the white in the rest of the house.

Naomi also had to think through the function of the space. The front room serves as both the living room and entryway. She didn't want to disregard the entrance to the house, so she sectioned the space into two parts—one third of the room became the entryway, and the other two thirds became the living room. Additionally, Naomi pondered the interaction between the living and dining rooms. "There's a wide doorway between them," she says. "They almost act as one room, so I had to think about them in context with each other." For her, this meant a continuation of theme and color.

### Starting Small

When Naomi begins a project, she often lets one or two pieces guide the overall style. "It's usually art or a textile," Naomi says. "It all comes back to that inspiration piece." Once the area has a starting point, decorating from scratch becomes a less daunting task.

Naomi's client in this project moved into his new house with only two pieces: a colorful painting by American pop artist Jim Dine, and a classic black lounge chair by Charles and Ray Eames. "The Eames lounge chair is such an iconic midcentury piece," Naomi says. "So I used the two to build the rest of the décor." Based on the black lounge chair, Naomi decided to stick with a neutral palette for the walls and furniture. The sofa features natural linen, and the dining table sports simple metal and wood. The other key furniture sticks to browns, creams and whites in materials ranging from leather and wood to metal and plastic.

**COLOR CONTINUITY.** Because of the wide doorway, the living and dining rooms act as one space. Naomi united the two rooms with bright rugs that are different colors, but give off the same bold feel.

**VINTAGE FINDS.** Seek out vintage accents you can mix with modern pieces. This bar cart, with its classic mix of wood and brass, was designed in the mid-1900s.





## Creating Layers

Once she had the neutral backdrop in place, Naomi layered with color. "Because I kept the furniture so clean, I could do bold accent pieces," she says. "Most of the color and pattern comes in through the accents." Naomi used the Jim Dine painting as the inspiration for the pops of color throughout. The painting includes bright red and blue, so she featured red in the living room and blue in the dining room.

Naomi wanted to layer several different styles so the home would feel personal and warm. "Midcentury style can be cold and minimal, and I wanted a warmer feel. So I gave a nod to midcentury, but mixed it with other styles." The dining room chairs, for example, are classic midcentury Herman Miller pieces, and the wood sideboard in the living room is a vintage piece from the Broyhill Brasilia collection. Still, Naomi included low, bohemian bar stools opposite the sideboard, along with a red Persian rug. "The goal was to choose great classic pieces that would work in any home, and then pair them with mixed accents," she says. "It gives the home an eclectic feel."

For the finishing touch, Naomi added custom furniture. She worked closely with her client to design three pieces specifically for the space: the coffee table and étagère bookshelf in the living room and the striking steel shelf in the dining room. "I really like to tailor a home with one or two custom pieces," Naomi says. But the whole home doesn't have to be custom. Naomi found the dining room table at a consignment store, and her client bought the white side table on Craigslist. "You don't always have to splurge on the décor for it to look great," Naomi says. Instead, save money wherever you can through creativity, and then splurge on a few special items. \*



**CLEAN LINES.** Naomi worked with her client to design this custom shelving unit. The simple art frames blend well with the clean lines of the shelf.

**LIGHT IT UP.** Naomi found this classic midcentury chandelier on eBay. Make sure that you exhaust all of your options when searching for a specific item.

# Electric Bungalow

SEE HOW THE OWNERS OF THIS OCEANSIDE ABODE STEERED CLEAR OF THE BEACH HOUSE CLICHÉS, ROCKING A RETRO-INSPIRED LOOK THAT'S MORE *MAD MEN* THAN MAINE.

BY VANESSA MCCULLOUGH/GAP INTERIORS/BUREAUX  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY GAP INTERIORS/GREG COX/BUREAUX  
STYLED BY KATE BOSWELL/GAP INTERIORS/BUREAUX



**BEST SEAT IN THE HOUSE.** "I love the swivel chair," one of the owners says. "When the folding doors are open during the day, you can make the most of the view, and at night you swivel it back into the room to socialize!"



**LAYERED STYLE.** The kitchen, dining and living room all flow into each other. The owner added in the ever-popular midcentury rosewood finish to soften transitions between old and new. "This sideboard has so much more personality than something bought from a predictable furniture store," he says.



While giving a tour of his four-bedroom Clifton Beach House,

the owner jokes, "It's like the 'Tardis' from [the BBC series] Dr. Who." Like the deceptively small time machine he references, his house takes space to a new dimension. "Part of the house's success," architect Jenny Mills says, "is that from the beach it just looks like a simple bungalow, when in fact it's a three-story, spacious home."

Eschewing typical white-and-bright for natural hues, the owner clad the walls in balau wood from Australia and the roof in cedar shingles. The exterior of it appears unassuming, organic and discreet, as if it's been there for years. "We didn't want that white, clapboard, typical beach house look," the owner explains. "It's important that it appears settled into its surroundings."

## A Mod Approach

The home's look feels unusual in a neighborhood of beach houses that favor the Cape Cod style, but it's also a look that will improve as time goes by—like all great things. "The shingle ages beautifully and the cladding will weather and become more and more silver," Jenny says. "It can only look better and better."

Despite the fact that two of the home's stories were literally carved out of the rock, the home maximizes light and flow. Part of this ability comes from a clever use of glass: a section of the floor of the living room is reinforced glass, adding an interesting design feature while also ensuring that the study below is naturally lit. A pitched double skylight over the kitchen makes it a sun-drenched, happy spot to be. The pool sits right in front of the living room, which is designed with fold-back doors on two sides. When the doors



Despite the owner's love of historic pieces, the décor has a happy balance of old and new. "I'm so inspired by the past and how style was interpreted," he says.

**LIKE NEW.** "It was important to get the right balance between old and new," one of the owners explains. For the kitchen they chose items like KitchenAid and Alessi, which have a vintage edge and complement the authentically retro crockery choices.



are open, the walls simply melt away. "It's blissful at sunset—the noise of the sea, the smell of the air wafting through," one owner says. "There's that complete sense of connection to the outside."

## Let Collections Take the Lead

The homeowners hold the '50s and '60s particularly close to their hearts, and they've been collecting décor pieces from vintage posters to glassware for years through avenues like eBay and Bidorbuy.

In regard to this house, the couple pride themselves on buying local. Discoveries range from a retro sideboard to the Springbok emblem on the living room wall and sets of airways crockery. Beautiful coffee cups from a secondhand shop lived their heyday in a local resort hotel at least fifty years ago. With one glance at a framed vintage poster next to the kitchen, the decades peel away: the photo was taken from the Clifton Hotel's balcony in 1952. In the foreground, guests sit in their *Mad Men*-esque outfits; look carefully at the houses dotted along the coastline and you can spot the original bungalow that once stood on this very plot.



**CASUAL DINING.** The dining room has a distinct retro aesthetic. The glass panels bring in more light and snapshots of outside greenery. The two framed vintage posters were sourced on eBay—both show scenes of Clifton Beach in the '50s. Above the stairs hangs a 'Flower of Life' beaded light which adds a touch of beach appeal. The new dining chairs were reupholstered with fabric from an old pair of curtains that the owners discovered in a thrift shop; the funky fabric adds a retro feel.

## MORE STYLE, Less Clutter

LIVING WITH YOUR VINTAGE COLLECTIBLES DOESN'T HAVE TO FEEL LIKE YOU'RE LIVING IN A THRIFT SHOP. HERE'S HOW TO TAME YOUR TREASURES FOR A HOME THAT'S CHIC AND TIDY.

**CHECK YOUR SHELF LIFE.** Vertical wall storage and floating shelves put your vintage finds front and center in display space. When you treat your collectibles like works of art, you'll be less likely to junk up your spaces, since you'll focus on letting your pieces shine.

**MAKE A CASE FOR IT.** Bookshelves, hutches and other styles of case goods saw their heyday in the midcentury as designers embraced simple shapes and efficient modular styling. Invest in furniture that works as a part of your midcentury collection and helps to store it.

**BECOME A CURATOR.** Editing your collections is a vital step to keep clutter under control and well presented. Only bring in items that truly add to your house as a whole. And when space gets tight, be ruthless about rotating your finds and willing to pass them on to a new home.



**LUXURY ELEMENTS.** The main bedroom has views of the sea and hills. Speakers were set into the wood-clad ceilings. The bright, quirky wallpaper is called 'Mobiles' by Sanderson, available through St Leger & Viney. The design was first created in 1950.



**UNEXPECTED ART.** In addition to décor items, the owner has recently started collecting old film slides and Super8 film reels. Here, a framed set paired with a Danish modern chair adds interest to a hallway. "Our parents don't quite understand why we would be bringing back all these things from the era they grew up in," he says. "But I think my mom now understands that things built in the '50s and '60s are actually better quality."

## Balance Old and New

Despite the owner's love of historic pieces, the décor keeps a happy balance between old and new. "I'm so inspired by the past and how style was interpreted," he says. "I like the personality of old things, but I don't want it to look like grandma's house. For example, in the kitchen we chose items like KitchenAid and Alessi, which have a little bit of a vintage edge but are new. You don't want to overdo it." His good eye for what works together also comes in handy—the bedrooms are playful compositions of bold wallpapers along with layers of textures and prints.

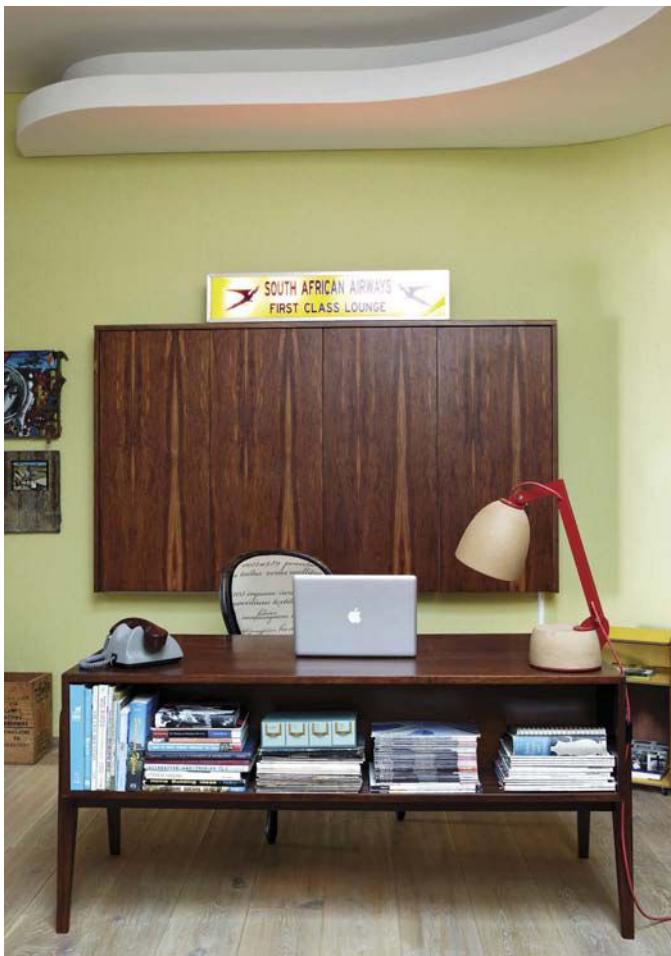
The pair have a keen sense for detail as well. After buying the yellow Murano glass lights for above the kitchen counter in a Woodstock shop, they determined to get the cables just right. After contacting endless local suppliers, they decided to order twisted cable from the U.K. (as well as the two ceiling roses) for an authentic vintage feel. The owners consider this attention to detail absolutely essential. "We had to get that vintage feel just right, and the cable and the fitting are as much a part of the story as the glass," the husband says.

As the couple stand upstairs in the living room with the doors folded back into their recesses, the beautiful beach-scene below unfolds with the lush sound of the waves, providing all of the ambience the home could ever need. \*



**SALVAGED BEAUTY.** The homeowners found the bathtub in a salvage shop, completely rusted with its feet hanging off. But the cost of having the flaking rust sandblasted off, applying a resin with a 'fake rust look' and redoing the enamel was still lower than the price of a new roll-top tub.



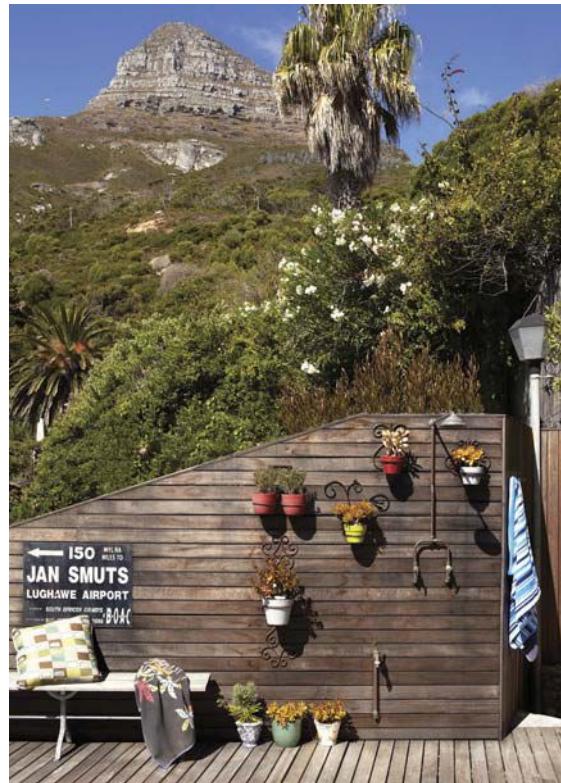


**TOP WORK HORSE.** "This room was really difficult in the design phase, and it went through many incarnations, including having built-in wraparound cabinetry and desks," the owner explains. "But we made the decision to go for a looser 'unbuilt-in' feel which we think works well."

**TOP RIGHT MARVELOUS MOTHER NATURE.** The deck shows incredible views, including the nearby rocky hills. The wall is decorated with succulent plants in colorful pots that stay there year-round.

**RIGHT RETRO LUXE.** More of the mod wallpaper makes its way into the bathroom, where it's paired with an antique Art Deco mirror for an eclectic look.

← → **SLEEPING IN THE TREES.** The second bedroom has a loft vibe thanks to a window designed into the pitched roof that brings a bit of the outside in. Atomic-themed wallpaper sets the retro tone for a modern tufted bed and simple bedding to feel right in line with the home's décor.



# A collaborated approach

BY JASON PARKER/BUREAUX  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY GREG COX/BUREAUX  
PRODUCED BY SVEN ALBERDING/BUREAUX

SEE HOW TO CURATE YOUR VINTAGE GEMS TO HAVE A HOME THAT'S WARM, OPEN AND WELCOMING, BOTH INSIDE AND OUT.





**EXHIBITING STYLE.** A museum-like curation of natural history—preserved butterflies, living walls of plants and antlers mixed with old prints of new world birds and flowers—prominently displays on the feature wall.





UNITED GREEN, GRAY AND BROWN TONES BRING A SENSE OF THE OUTDOORS INTO THIS TREASURE TROVE OF A HOME.

Filtered light fills the living room, highlighting collectable Danish classics and midcentury memorabilia, while various vignettes draw your eyes into the mind of its owners. Interior stylist Matt Allison and his wife Kathy fell in love with this ranch-style, Midcentury Modern home: It's a time capsule of a different era, pulled straight out of a '50s architectural journal, and its only prior inhabitants were the retired couple who purchased it new. "We did update a few things: The electrics and plumbing both had to be redone, and we also reworked the bathrooms," Matt says. "One of them was entirely duck egg blue—including a matching basin and toilet—and the other was black and pale yellow. While they both had their charm, we decided to update the fittings. Other than that, we just added a lick of paint, sanded and sealed the original wooden floors and then moved in."

## The Modern Garden

The majority of the work happened outside, as gardening enthusiast Matt designed landscapes to complement the building. The front garden now brims with clusters of indigenous aloes, crassulas, proteas and various succulents that come alive with color throughout the seasons. Their hues of red, orange and yellow strikingly accent the dark gray exterior of the house. The backyard is squared off into partitions planted with form plants, expertly divided up by industrial-style concrete pavers: flaxes, wild grasses, restios, bamboo and one solitary prunus tree. Custom planters made by local designer Joe Paine are bursting with tropical bromeliads and exotic cacti, their pots adding yellow

**ROCK VAULT.** The front garden is a mix of stone chips, large stone pavers and rockeries, each of them housing an extensive array of indigenous aloes, crassulas and proteas.

**NATURAL LOOK.** Outdoor living with a custom-built steel and balau table and Joan Gaspar-designed Lisboa chairs. The custom-made Kreep planter overflows with exotic cacti and eye-catching succulents





**COLLECTABLE CLASSICS.** The cork-lined dining room features a '60s-era, Danish-inspired Duros dining room table, chairs and sideboard, along with a collectable Poul Cadovius Royal System wall unit filled with keepsakes and knickknacks from friends and artists. A vintage macramé planter houses a smattering of hanging plants.



**AS SEEN ON TV.** The living room wall boasts a custom-made pair of wall sconces made to order by one of the suppliers to the set of *Mad Men*, the vintage Masketeers ducks were ordered via Etsy from an antiques dealer in Oregon, and the clock was an eBay purchase from a store in New York, making it a truly well-traveled collection of sourced finds.



and white accents. The garden also houses a Nordic-inspired wooden cabin that doubles as a playhouse for the children, which Matt designed and built during a particularly wet winter—a ‘labor of love’ in his own words. Heritage koekoek chickens either roam the lawn scratching for worms or roost in their Midcentury Modern-inspired coop, while Matt picks herbs and vegetables from his well-stocked potager garden.

## A Functional Heart of the Home

The kitchen was redone to better suit the Allisons, who avidly cook at home. “We lived with the old one for the better part of two years, but I found it counterproductive,” Kathy says. “I redesigned it to suit the way I work and opened it up for open-plan dining.”



BY LINING THE  
**WALLS** and floors in  
cork, the Allisons  
effectively set the area  
apart in this small  
open-plan space.



**FAMILY BAND.** Nathan and Olivia at play on the family piano, a pastime shared by three generations. A brass and clay modular planter brings in the midcentury vibe.



The era-sensitive changes included taking down the wall that separated the kitchen from the dining room and repositioning the stove to be more central to the space. The couple still made sure to retain the home's original materials wherever possible.

## Hunting and Gathering

The living room is filled with a myriad of collectibles in midcentury modern and Danish styles, each with a unique story. "The brass sconces were made for me in Palm Springs, California," Matt says. "I tracked down the person who designed them for the set of *Mad Men* and had him custom-make me this set in brass."

Teak collectibles abound in the room, flanked by matching chairs and a Duros sideboard. A Poul Cadovius Royal System wall unit perches against the '70s cork-lined wall of the dining room. "The Cado is a true gem," Matt says. "Much like many of these pieces, it was a thrift-store find. I bought it from an elderly couple that in turn bought it from the Danish consulate in the '80s. They wanted what they paid, which was \$90, although today they sell for thousands."

## The Art of Display

Vignettes cover many of their surfaces: collections of family photos, keepsakes and knickknacks. Old cameras, most of them still operational, rest atop bookshelves alongside wooden toys. "It's important for the kids to feel that that this is their home as much as ours," Matt says, "so you will find the odd toy here and there ... just little flourishes or touches they add along the way."

The house is a time capsule of a bygone era, straight out of a 1950s architectural journal; its only prior inhabitants were the retired couple who purchased it new.





natural world." Matt says. "I still have the first crocodile head I bought when I was 14, and over the years I have been drawn to collecting these types of natural curiosities. I was born with bowerbird-like tendencies, I guess."

Despite the seemingly random nature of these collections, they're neat and orderly, perfectly styled as Matt plies his trade in this home-turned-gallery space.

Matt and Kathy's joint office continues the Nordic feel. Geometric cork tiles on plywood backing hold notes and cards, while walls are lined with Matt's guitars; this space is a sanctuary and an escape. \*

**clockwise | SLEEK SPREAD.** The modern kitchen features a porcelain floor and composite stone countertops and simple duco-sprayed cupboard fronts.

**CLEAN LIVING.** Matt and Kathy's office features homemade shelving and simple plywood backing dotted with laser-cut hexagonal cork pinboards that keep things in order.

**EASY ON THE EYES.** Simple cotton percale sheets accented with a mustard throw give the bedroom an elegant grace. A low-profile walnut hardboard has a built-in cubby that also functions as a night stand—a combo design typical of Midcentury Modern modular style.





**PICTURE PERFECT.** Vintage cameras that Matt still uses sit shelved on display, mixed with family photos, books and kids' toys.



**BLOOM BASE.** A custom planter by local product designer Joe Paine ([joepaine.withtank.com](http://joepaine.withtank.com)) holds tropical bromeliads.



**DYNAMIC DUOS.** To create interest in the flat yard, Matt added levels with simple plywood palette-style decking. The black playhouse draws inspiration from Nordic cabins, ensuring that little Nathan has a place to play that still blends into the sleek garden style.





**POP PRINCESS.** In the entryway, a fringed '60s model takes center stage while a mod green midcentury-inspired armchair makes a statement with its sleek tapering legs. Tilly uses lots of small vintage tables and cabinets, both to add charm to her rental and to store more midcentury accents.



# RETRO REMIX

BY RUTH CORBETT/ GAP INTERIORS  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY INGRID RASMUSSEN/  
GAP INTERIORS

SEE HOW THIS KALEIDOSCOPE OF THRIFT-SHOP FINDS, FLEA-MARKET RESCUES AND EBAY BARGAINS COMES TOGETHER AS A MODERN-VINTAGE HEAVEN.

“Vintage and antique midcentury pieces were usually small-scale. For my limited floor plan, I needed reproductions that would give me the style I wanted, but in usually even shorter or more narrow versions.”

HAVE YOU EVER FELT LIKE YOU WERE BORN IN THE WRONG ERA?

Designer Tilly Hemingway grew up with parents who were fashion designers in the '80s, but her heart has always belonged to the '50s and '60s. With a limited floor plan and some restrictions in her rental, she's had to get creative about infusing her home with her style. However, with the use of clever stylish storage, the right scale furniture and plenty of color, she's turned her modest builder-floor apartment into a midcentury lover's oasis.

## Big Style for a Small Space

The open plan living room and kitchen, with its warm wood flooring and cool white walls, feels timeless and unfussy—perfect for allowing the various materials used (including wood, Formica, plastic and ceramic) room to breathe.

The neutral foundation also meant that her clean-lined, vintage-inspired furniture really manage to set the tone for each room. “Vintage and antique midcentury pieces were usually small-scale. For my limited floor plan, I needed reproductions

**DRINK IT UP.** A collection of barware and tea sets comes together as a pseudo-cocktail cart. Tilly's favorite glassware includes '50s carnival glass, atomic Canonsburg ceramics like the teacups seen here and graphic bar sets.

that would give me the style that I wanted, but usually even shorter or more narrow versions of them."

Since the furniture itself held the key to delineating the different living areas within the large open room, case goods and other display furniture played a big role in the redesign. In the area between the living and dining rooms, Tilly chose an open-shelf hutch. Her collection of retro kitchenalia commands the space and helps transition the area in a functional yet stylish way.

She united the rooms by using vintage finds that all had the same wood finishes. "Since all of these pieces would be visible in the room, they needed to match to give the entire open-plan space a sense of cohesion," she says.



**The owner united the rooms by choosing vintage finds with the same wood finishes. "Since all of these pieces would be visible in the room, they needed to match to give the entire open-plan space a sense of cohesion."**

## Reinvent and Reuse

Not every find of Tilly's stays true to its original use. In the name of rescuing old pieces, she's reinvented some to serve her needs. "I got the retro kitchen cabinet along with 14 other pieces of furniture from a salvage yard, for between \$30 and \$60 for each piece," she says. "I've been doing them up gradually. I sanded down a side cabinet and then painted the inside green. I didn't have space for it in the kitchen, but I did need a showcase piece that would stand out in the entryway," she says.

And when you can't replace something, you work with it. "This place was meant to be a furnished rental, and the prior owner was able to remove almost everything, but I had to take the sofa," Tilly says. "It's not very beautiful, so I covered it with some '50s fabric I found at an estate sale and made it work!"





**COLOR IT YOURS.** Tilly spruced up an old store display case from a flea market by painting the inside green and using it as a hallway credenza. The slim profile is perfect for a tight space. Beside it, a magazine rack inspired by the Charles and Ray Eames atomic wall rack adds a fun touch.



**COLOR CODED.** The vintage hutch serves as a transition piece between the living room and kitchen. Tilly tries to pick out vintage pieces in the same wood finishes so that they work well in her open-plan living space.





**DRESSED-UP DÉCOR.** Don't let your limitations ruin your design scheme. Tilly updated her less-than-perfect couch with vintage fabric to help bring it up to speed with the rest of her vintage furnishings.

**THINKING INSIDE THE BLOCK.** A color-blocked dresser adds a strong focal point to Tilly's minimal bedroom. It's also an easy DIY project to give a new piece a retro look: just paint doors different colors!



## It's All in the Details

Tilly's beloved collections of quirky furnishings and accessories give the apartment its individual feel. "I am a bit of a hoarder," she laughs. "If I see something I love, I have to buy it."

Some of Tilly's favorite finds, such as the vintage colored cabinets, take center stage in her bedroom. "I love bursts of color, and color blocking is my favorite trend, so it fulfills a lot of things on the checklist," she says.

On the other end, she's spiced up the look of her simple room with a working old-time record player console she found on eBay. She displays her clothes—many of them vintage—out in the open on a wooden clothes rack: a true curator's approach to form and function.

## Strategic Storage

Tilly jazzed up her basic rental kitchen with a vintage Formica dining set. Her colourful ceramics grace her glass-paned cabinets, showing off favorite collectibles while adding style to the kitchen.

Whatever accents don't fit in the kitchen she disperses through her home as vignettes, simply biding her time until her obsessions can find room in her large dream kitchen. "I pick up vintage tea flasks or picnic sets or tea sets—all from the '50s, '60s and '70s—as I go along, and I love them to bits," she says. "One day, when I get a huge kitchen, I'll get them all out and show them off properly." \*



Not every vintage find of Tilly's stays true to its original use. In the name of rescuing old pieces, she's reinvented some of them to serve her needs. "I didn't have space for the retro kitchen cabinet in the kitchen, but I did need a showcase piece that would stand out in the entryway."



**SERVING UP STYLE.** In a simple kitchen like Tilly's, a retro dining set says it all. This Formica table, complete with oil-cloth chairs, came from a flea market. She turned the two-seater set into a four-seat option by pairing the vintage chairs with simple wood ones that she upholstered with complementary seats.

## Tips for Tracking Down

# VINTAGE

Specialist shows are great places for you to find original pieces and future classics, direct from the dealers. Search for "modernism shows" online to learn more about vintage showcases in your area.

Online shops do the legwork for you by sourcing and researching all of the best furniture, lighting and home accessories. Check out midcenturymodernfind.com, 1stdibs.com and lushpad.com for a myriad of 20th-century retro and vintage pieces.

Etsy and eBay can both serve as a wealth of resources for midcentury finds, but watch out for things described as "in the style of" or "inspired by," since they may be fakes. Take note of the size, condition and location of the item (and delivery costs), and don't be afraid to ask questions if you need to know more.

Craigslist can be your shortcut to great midcentury deals. Be prepared to act fast—these listings often disappear quickly. Also spend time searching more generic terms, in case any of the sellers aren't aware that what they're offering is a vintage gem. Pay careful attention to item photos to spot retro finds that may not be identified as such.

Secondhand shops and flea markets are full of cast-off furnishings and fabrics, but it's good to familiarize yourself with key styles, designers and manufacturers, so you can tell which pieces deserve your attention.



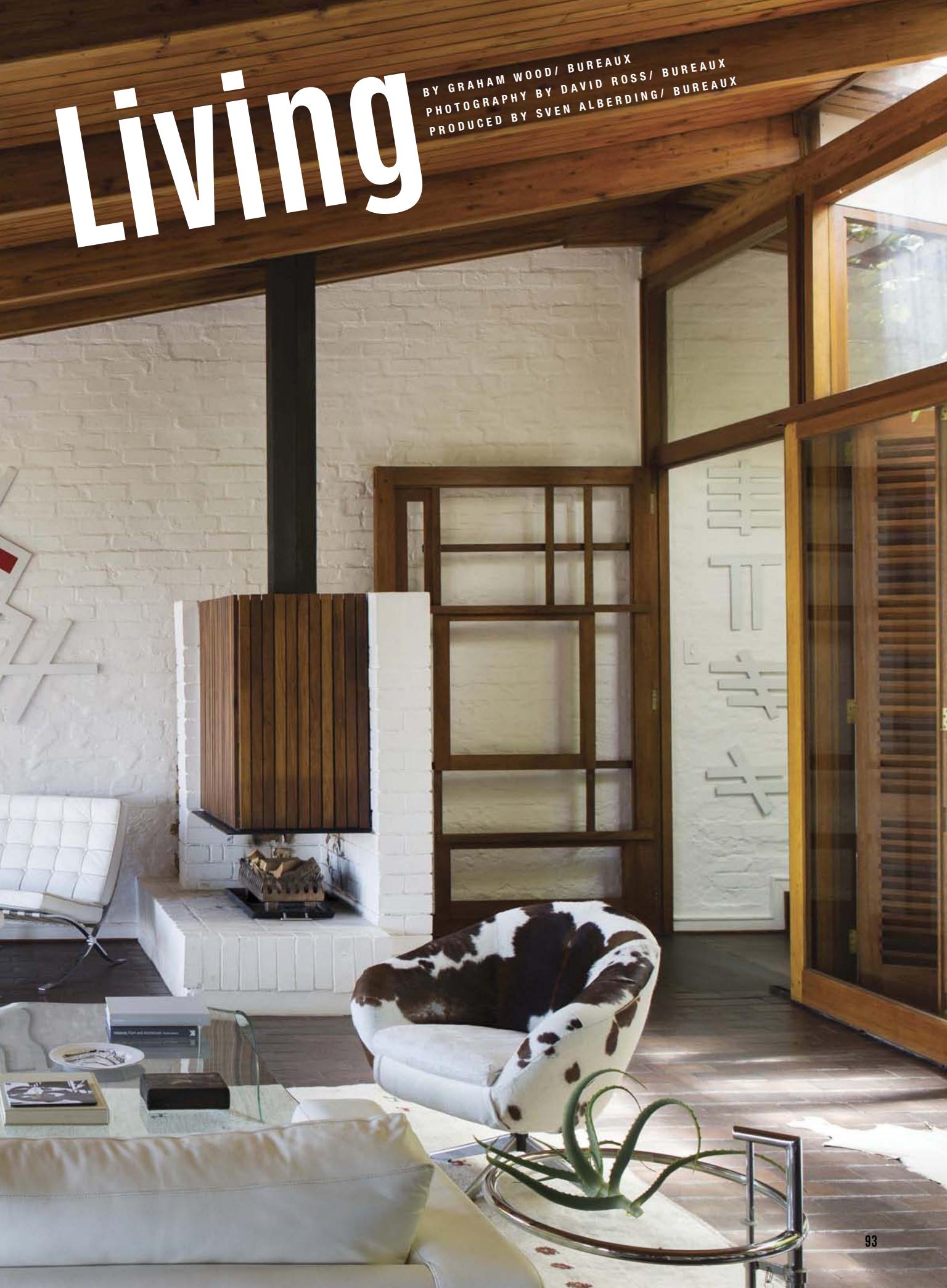
# Indoor/outdoor

A photograph of a modern living room. In the foreground, a white cowhide armchair with a dark brown patterned base is positioned on a white rug. Behind it, a large glass door with a wooden frame and horizontal slats leads to a garden with green trees. To the right, a white leather Barcelona-style chair with a chrome base is placed next to a light-colored wooden cabinet with a white framed painting of a sailboat on top. The room has a high ceiling with wooden beams and recessed lighting.

THIS MIES VAN DER ROHE-  
STYLE HOUSE WAS SUBTLY  
AND SENSITIVELY RENOVATED  
BY UNLOCKING ITS ZEN-LIKE  
SERENITY AND CONNECTION  
TO ITS SURROUNDINGS.

# Living

BY GRAHAM WOOD/ BUREAUX  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID ROSS/ BUREAUX  
PRODUCED BY SVEN ALBERDING/ BUREAUX





## **F YOUR MIDCENTURY MODERN ADDICTIONS INCLUDE FLOOR-TO-CEILING GLASS,**

striking architectural swathes of wood and clean open floor plans, then this house is for you. Mies van der Rohe protégé Pius Pahl designed the house in the early 1970s, inspired by the light and shadows that traveled across the hillside throughout the day. His aim was to make the most of the landscape and give the home a sense of place as naturally integrated as the rocks in the ground. What he eventually created was a striking but unobtrusive white-walled villa complete with spectacular views, beautiful proportions, wide wooden ceilings and clay-tiled floors throughout, a gorgeous courtyard with a pergola, a wide terrace and an open hearth. Three decades later, when

architectural historian Dicey du Toit and her husband Thom came to see it, the house was almost exactly the same as it used to be. The couple was quickly struck by its serenity, connection with its surroundings and lack of monumentality. "Everything was so peaceful and quiet," Dicey says. "Thom fell in love with it the moment he stepped through the front door."

## **House Rules**

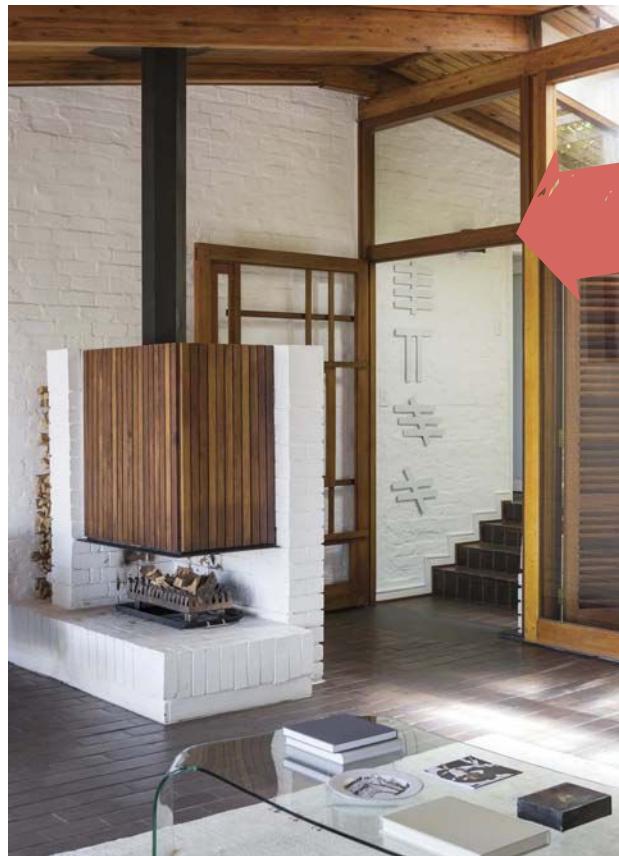
Dicey and Thom moved into the house along with their two children, Magdaleen and Duan, and made no changes to the building apart from repairing some of the woodwork and



replacing the '70s orange, green and brown curtains with stackable timber shutters. It was a full eight years before they even considered doing a renovation. In the meantime, while Dicey began researching Pahl's heritage and philosophy, the du Toits contended with the fact that the house completely rejected their furniture.

"We moved in with our antiques and it was terrible," Dicey laughs. Through trial and error, she soon learned that it would be all but impossible to impose her will on their house. "It shows you quite clearly what it wants," she explains. "You have to let go of any selfish thoughts and live in it and respect it and be with it. The moment you do that ... well, you're in heaven."

**LEADING LINES.** The wide-open lounge area leads onto the terrace, and its wall of glass overlooks views of the mountains. The sitting area is filled with design classics, such as an Eileen Gray side table and an arc lamp. A Barcelona chair that was designed by Pahl's Bauhaus mentor Mies van der Rohe was the first piece of midcentury designer furniture that Dicey and Thom purchased. The iconic bucket chairs were covered in Nguni hide for extra flair.



THE COUPLE HAD A NEW DOOR CUSTOM-MADE TO MATCH THE GEOMETRY AND PROPORTIONS THAT PAHL HAD USED THROUGHOUT THE REST OF THE HOUSE.

**MODERN WARMTH.** The fireplace exemplifies the way architect Pius Pahl reinterpreted the aspect of Cape Dutch vernacular, just like the whitewashed walls. Landscape artist and sculptor Strydom van der Merwe designed the steel artwork on the wall adjacent to the fireplace. It is composed of symbols taken from the Ogham alphabet, representing the elements surrounding the house, and an amalgam of the similar pieces at the front entrance.

Even trying to paint a room in a color would be disastrous, Dicey says, relating an anecdote in which the original owner asked Pahl's advice on paint colors. "Madam," he reportedly replied, "there is only one color, and that is white."

## Furniture Basics

Beginning with a Barcelona chair, the couple gradually assembled a collection of Midcentury Modern classics that the house would allow. They scoured estate sales, online shops and even local dealers for Pahl-approved designers such as Eileen Gray, Le Corbusier and Noguchi, which all worked perfectly in the space.

Because of the home's wide rooms and strong linear silhouettes, simple light furnishings and accessories worked best. The couple stuck with low-profile styles that wouldn't interrupt the shapes in the architecture. Subtle curving lines for chair legs and tabletops help add fluidity to the décor scheme without overtaking the basic motif.

**A PERFECT PAIR.** In the dining room, the Panton chairs exude classic Midcentury Modern design. A pendant light turns the kitchen and dining rooms into a cohesive space.





**AL FRESCO APPROACH.** The du Toits added a picture window, letting in the views. Dicey likes to sit on the Bertoia stool and read magazines, or rest her recipe books on the floating shelf while cooking. The pendant lights are the work of Phillippe Starck.

**LET THERE BE LIGHT.** The kitchen is the only room in the house with significant architectural changes. The couple replaced all of the appliances and removed the cabinets that divided the kitchen from the rest of the living area, opting for the openness of glass walls and a floating divider cupboard.



## Remodeling a Great

When the time came to refurbish, the du Toits found that they would have to do so with the utmost sensitivity. By that stage, they had lived in the house long enough to have absorbed its unique qualities. Dicey says that it is no exaggeration to say that it changed their way of life. "It's completely different," she says. "Before, we lived like people in a house." Now the openness, the Zen-like proximity to the natural world and the genuine, impossible-to-define calm have become a way of life that makes anything else impossible to contemplate.

The du Toits called on architect Servaas de Kock of Malherbe Rust Architects to head up the renovation. "The challenges on a job of this nature are first to understand the architectural principles along which Pahl designed the house," Servaas says, "and then to assess all of the renovations and the additions against that concept."

The house's design has its foundation in such a comprehensive and mathematical set of relationships that any changes would have knock-on effects that would ultimately upset its equilibrium and detract from the overall design.

In the end, they decided to convert the garage into a sunroom, replace the garage doors with windows and redo the kitchen and bathrooms—and not much else. The most dramatic change took place in the kitchen. Servaas replaced the cabinets that originally walled it off from the living area with a glass box as well as a floating divider cupboard. He felt that the decision aligned with the original intention of the design. "The roof volume defines the living area and kitchen as one space," he notes. The couple also decided to open up views of the mountains from the kitchen, and Dicey now loves to sit and read at the floating shelf and picture window.

Servaas noticed a shadow line between the floor, wall and roof planes which made the walls appear to float. "These principles were reinstated in their newly renovated thresholds and floating window sills, carpet trims and clear glass beadings," he says. He rebuilt the high-gloss white wardrobes leading into the bedrooms, but Dicey says, "They were done exactly along Pahl's plan, although they used new material."



**Due to the home's wide rooms and strong silhouettes, simple light furnishings and accessories worked best. The couple decided to stick with low-profile styles that wouldn't interrupt the shapes in the architecture.**



One last, simple change seemed to unlock the spirit of the place. Contrary to Pahl's design, a number of the large windows had cottage panes, so Servaas installed new windows according to the original proportions. Dicey says that the minute the new windows were up, something seemed to click into place like a piece of a puzzle. "The home became itself again," she says, and in flooded the sense of peace she had noticed when she first crossed its threshold.

## Garden Variety

"We're definitely more in contact with the change of seasons and when things happen outside," Dicey says. "When it rains in the winter, it feels like it's falling right next to you while you're sitting on the couch."

She loves the fact that nothing more than a transparent sheet of glass separates her from the elements. She adds that whenever they go on vacation and stay in a conventional house "with windows and walls and things," it takes no longer than three days before her children become restless and want to go home. Returning to the house, she says, returns the calm to her heart. "Just being here and having a place where you can sit," she says, "gives you peace all over." \*



**CLEAN LIVING.** The new, glossy-white cabinets leading into the bedrooms were built to match Pahl's original design.

**FOREVER YOUNG.** Magdaleen's room proves that a college student's aesthetic can meld with modern minimalist. Art tacked onto the wall shines in the clean, clutter-free space.

**SECOND TO NONE.** Downstairs, the bedrooms lead off of what was once a playroom. The Le Corbusier lounger serves as a great focal point for the room that—while bold—doesn't overwhelm the décor. The Noguchi coffee table gives a nod to the Zen-like lightness of the house, and the rug is a pure-wool Turkish Gabbeh. The pendant lamp was imported by Pahl, and it used to hang in the dining room. Thom had it written into the sale contract that the lamp would be included with the house.







**LIGHT HEARTED.** The main bedroom shines in white and neutrals, from the linen to the Nguni hide on the floor. Dicey says that because of the house's intimate connection to its surroundings and the way it draws in its exterior, its inherent color scheme is green. Any paint color but white would upset the effect.



**A ZEN WELCOME.** Creating an outside room intimately connects the garden to the house, which also enhances ventilation and has a cooling effect. The pergola gives a nod to Cape Dutch vernacular architecture. The steel-leaf screens add a bohemian touch to the butterfly chairs that are midcentury classics designed in Argentina.

**A NATURE WALK.** The lounge leads directly onto the main terrace, with gorgeous views over vineyards and mountains. The stacking wooden louver shutters were the house's first alteration, so the couple could do away with curtains while still controlling light, views and privacy.

**Pius Pahl**, a colleague of Le Corbusier and the last architect to qualify at Germany's revolutionary Bauhaus design academy—the epicenter of the most influential design movement of the 20th century—is the subject of a permanent exhibition in the Bauhausmuseum in Berlin. He became one of the key figures in the modernist movement in South Africa after he settled in Stellenbosch in 1952 with his South African wife. Pahl is largely known for pioneering a regionally authentic brand of modernism, integrating Internationalist principles with local considerations and even (radically) reinterpreted aspects of the Cape Dutch vernacular.



# MIX & MATCH

THE MINIMALIST PALETTE OF THIS HAMPTONS HOME GETS A COMPELLING EDGE WITH ACCENTS OF MIDCENTURY FURNITURE, FLEA MARKET TREASURES AND LOCAL FINDS.

BY TORREY KIM  
STYLED BY JACQUELINE DEMONTRAVEL  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ERIC STRIFFLER



**J**UST LIKE IN FASHION, THE BEST HOME STYLE IS A BLEND OF BRANDS AND MAKERS, NOT A HEAD-TO-TOE OUTFIT. Coco Myers took this approach when she designed the interior of her East Coast abode. "When we found the home, it had been in the same family for several generations, and the one-car garage had actually been one of the town's original butcher shops," Coco says. The home had a lot of charm, but it was outdated and quite small for the growing family, which would soon include three young boys.



## Signature Pieces

Coco's late husband was a minimalist architect—the perfect person to oversee the home's renovation. "Our first update was to open the kitchen a little to modernize it," she says. The update involved removing a flue in the middle of the kitchen, taking out linoleum floors, making the ceiling higher and installing new counters, cabinets and floors. "My husband's whole aesthetic was

minimalist," Coco says. "To put a personal touch on the kitchen, he went to Los Angeles shop Antique Stove Heaven, which refurbishes original stoves from the 1940s."

## Go Big & Bright

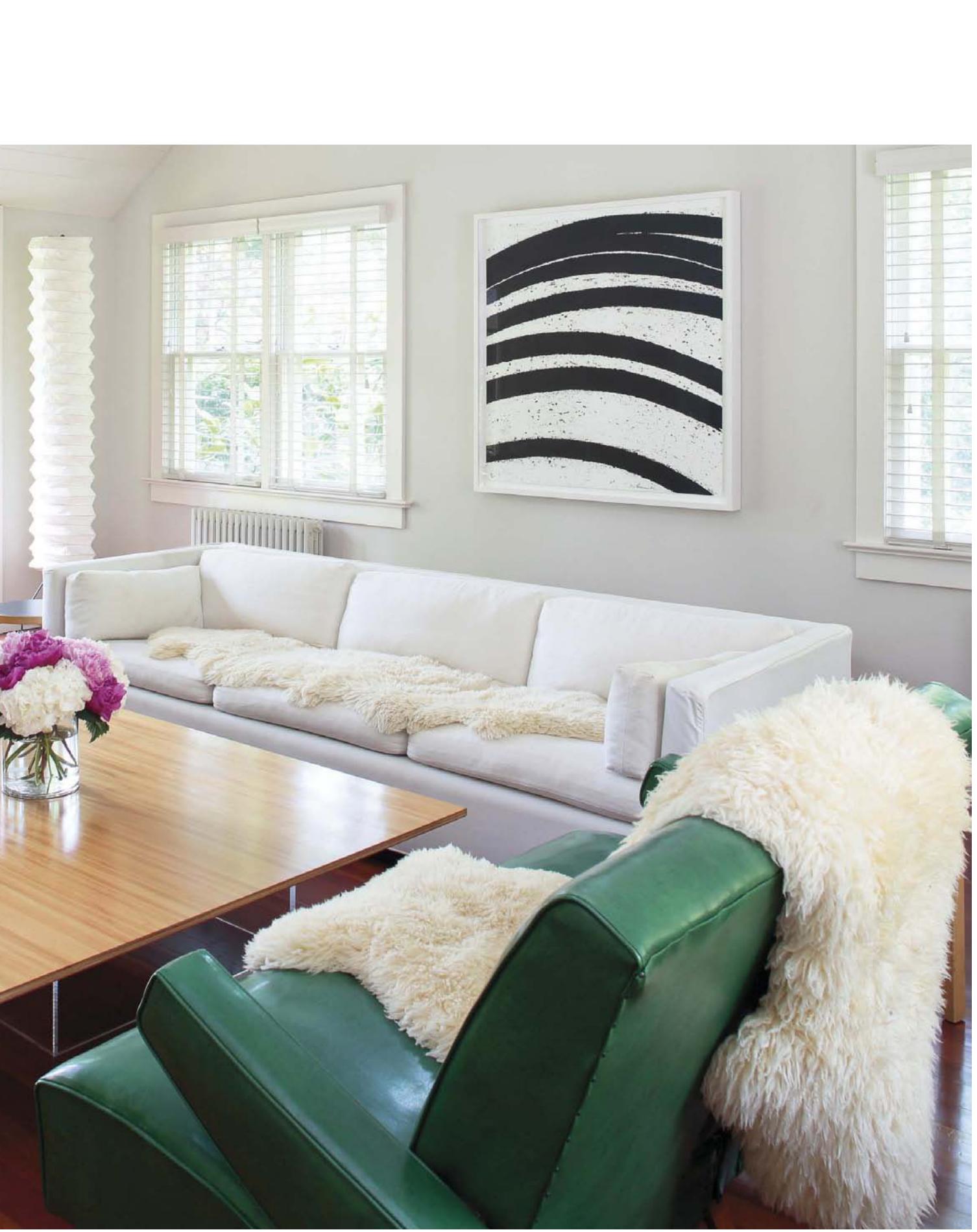
To create more space for their family, the couple simply redefined existing spaces. They raised the roof to make room for a cozy bedroom in what had originally been the attic, and then they added a living room on the first floor. The home's basement level contains a large playroom and full bath. "We placed window wells that are quite large down there, so the area gets filled with light even though it's on the basement level, and that made the house feel more airy," Coco says.

"The new living room gave us an extra adult space, and the playroom gave the kids a place for their toys and games. Those additions—although they didn't add a massive amount of square footage—made the house workable for five people," she says. "I'm not sure this home would have worked in the long-term with three boys if we hadn't added those spaces."

**SALVAGE GEMS.** These green and yellow chairs previously served as seats on a train. They can be put together to form a sofa or spaced apart in different parts of the room.



**Lots of looks inspire her décor, but under Coco's seaside accents, pop-art leanings and flea market rescues lies a mid-century furniture foundation. This unique blend gives the space a personal stamp.**





**OLD MEETS OLDER.** The home's original mantel blends beautifully with the modern table that was custom-designed by Coco's late husband, a minimalist architect whose vision can be seen throughout the bungalow. It is juxtaposed by a second, more modern mantel in a separate room.

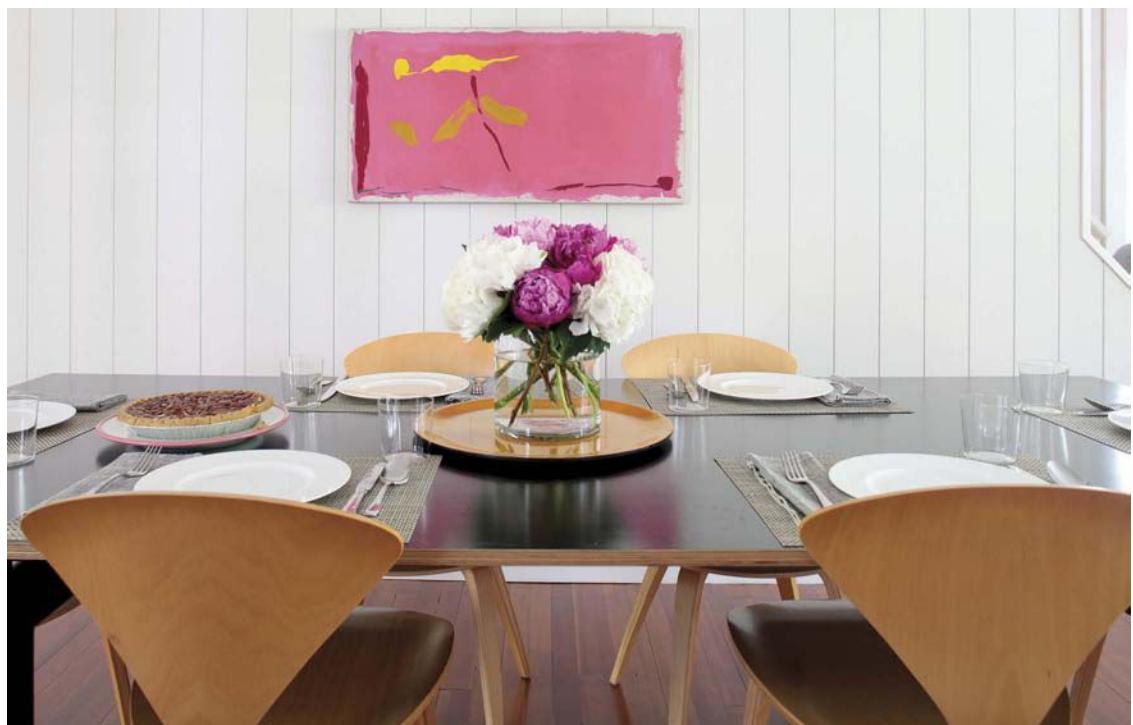


## Simplicity Meets Luxury

Although the family never veered from a commitment to minimalist architecture, the home still feels luxurious thanks to several unique touches that they have artfully placed throughout the home. "My husband, Dan, decided to put radiant heat floors into the master bath," Coco says. "They're such a great touch, but you'd never know they were there." In addition, most of the lights are on dimmers to easily and quickly change the tone of the rooms, and the family invests in a nice piece of art about once a year to help give the home an especially warm feel.

Neutral walls throughout the home allow it to look open and airy, and make the colors in the furniture and décor pop brightly. The paint color scheme ranges from white to off-white to gray, ensuring that if Coco hangs a new piece of art or introduces a bright sofa, the walls will not clash. The family used oil-based paint on the moldings so that it can be easily wiped clean of whatever scuffs appear during the course of a busy family life with three boys.

**FLEXIBLE SEATING.** The Arne Jacobsen-style kitchen chairs in this home match the dining-room chairs, so if the family ever needs to add a leaf to the dining table to accommodate a large party, chairs can be moved in from the kitchen seamlessly. The vintage stove was refurbished by the store Antique Stove Heaven, which specializes in modernizing an old stove's working parts.



# FLEA MARKET STYLE

## A GUIDE TO MIXING GENRES

Coco Myers' bungalow feels so striking primarily because of how successfully she has managed to mix genres. An ultra-modern dining table sits in a century-old restored mantel's shadow, and both look perfectly at home. Coco says that you shouldn't be afraid to mix eras, because you can still achieve a unified look by just following a few simple guidelines.

*"I think as long as everything isn't fussy or frilly, it can fit well into a room that is otherwise minimal,"* she says. *"For instance, you can take a simple white room and put a crazy chandelier there, and it won't look out of place. The trick is to not have too many bold statements that are clashing in a room."*

In Coco's home, the living room features four large chairs that were originally seats on a train. She placed them together to look like sofas and accented them with fur throws to mix up the textures. "We had three green chairs and one yellow, and figured, 'Why not put them together?' The yellow adds an extra bit of color, and the fur throws have great neutral colors that accent the other long white sofa and the black and white artwork," she says.

If you have any concerns about mixing colors in your rooms, focus on your base palette and work from there. "If you have a white room, the paintings on the wall can lend color to the space, or you can have a bold couch and simple black-and-white art," Coco says. "Once you have the colors set, you will worry less about the eras because the colors will allow them to fit together."



**LOUNGING IN STYLE.** The master bedroom was originally two smaller rooms that the family combined to create a comfortable haven with its own bathroom. An iconic Le Corbusier chaise lounger is the standout statement in the room.

## The Midcentury Statement

Lots of looks inspire her décor, but between Coco's seaside accents, pop-art leanings and flea market rescues lies a midcentury furniture foundation. This unique blend gives the space a personal stamp.

From her Arne Jacobsen and Bertoia chairs to the eye-catching sculptural bentwood chair and ottoman, the large items in the room not only take up prime real estate—they set the modern tone of the whole house.

The home's most dramatic feature is its focus on long angles throughout. A desk with enough space for two workstations, a room-length low bookcase, a long dining table that seats 12 people and a 12-foot-long mantel in the living room (created from a white monolithic plank) were all personally designed by Dan in order to maintain a commitment to the minimalist aesthetic that he so lovingly created for the family.

SEE RESOURCES, PAGE 128



# SMALL WONDERS

MODERNIST STYLE IS TAILOR-MADE FOR HOMES SHORT OF SQUARE FOOTAGE. SEE HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR SMALL SPACE AND COMBINE IT WITH YOUR LOVE OF VINTAGE LIVING.

BY JICKIE TORRES · PHOTOGRAPHY BY MELBA LEVICK

WHILE MIDCENTURY DESIGN CERTAINLY CONJURES UP IMAGES OF VAST EXPANSES OF MINIMALIST SPACE, pads of multi-level rooms and step-down living zones, true '50s and '60s design was space conscious, pulling double duty in smart storage-making ways. In his book, *Dreaming Small: Intimate Interiors*, author Douglas Woods tours homes that prove that bigger isn't always better. And in the Midcentury Modern world, design elements are geared towards making any space feel light, airy and utterly cool.



## A FULL DISPLAY

This sophisticated shelter personifies California modernism. With his two-sided glass box, architect Craig Ellwood illustrates that modern interiors are ultimately well-edited interiors. When you take the everything-on-display approach common to open-plan living and modular room design, the key rule is to remove non-essentials and let each collectible and accent contribute to the design as a whole.



## AND LIGHTWEIGHT LUXURIOUS FURNISHINGS

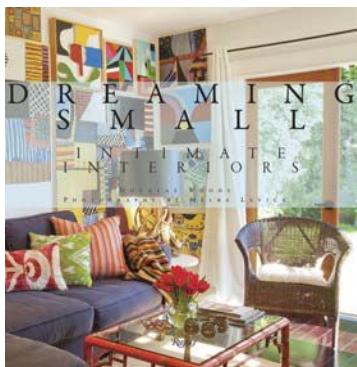
From the pair of Marcell Breur Wassily chairs to the Le Corbusier lounger, it's easy to see how the metal framework and the slim leather upholstery of midcentury seating lightens the mood of a space by literally allowing more light to travel around a room. Rather than heavy, dense club chairs or sofas, Midcentury Modern furnishings make the most of hairpin feet and turned legs to give the illusion of more space.





## COMPACT STYLE

"Arriving at the perfect time and place to experiment, early modern architects and designers like Richard Neutra and Rudolf Schindler took advantage of new building materials and technologies to pursue a sleek and ultimately affordable style of design," Woods writes. "Economizing space wherever possible was for many as much an economic necessity as it was a modernist ideal, and such architects became experts at paring things down to their essential functions while maintaining an elegance that taught people to see the beauty in industrial design."



**Dreaming Small: Intimate Interiors** by Douglas Woods, published by Rizzoli, ©2014; [rizzoliusa.com](http://rizzoliusa.com).

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# Sleek on the Sand

BY SARAH JANE  
O'KEEFE  
IMAGES COURTESY  
OF PRINCETON  
ARCHITECTURAL  
PRESS

DESIGNER-ARCHITECT ANDREW GELLER MADE HIS MARK ON THE AMERICAN LANDSCAPE BY CREATING BEACH HOUSES THAT BROKE THE MOLD AND EMBRACED THEIR SURROUNDINGS.



**M**ore *Barbarella* than *Beach Blanket Bingo*, seaside houses of the midcentury have architect Andrew Geller to thank for breaking the mold of the classic coastal clapboard and creating something altogether stellar. Author Alastair Gordon takes us inside Geller's chic futuristic designs, describing the quixotic designer-architect as the driving force behind the most innovative beach houses of the '50s and '60s.

## Learning Curve

Before Geller began redefining the look of beachfront properties, he worked for the Loewy Corporation. His time with the company began in product design. "Geller learned that the goal of the modern industrial designer was to contain a variety of different parts within a single envelope, to make a product instantly recognizable and desirable to the consumer," Alistair writes.

Streamlined elements, smooth lines and tapered edges served as foundational elements to this goal—principles that Geller would carry throughout his time in the company as well as in his eventual innovative home designs.

## Breakout Role

While his Loewy career was successful, Geller wanted to branch out into more creative projects. He began his work in the coastal region of the northeastern U.S. "While Geller had designed a few earlier residential projects, his 1955 beach

house was the first breakthrough and marked the real beginning of his new career," Alastair writes.

Geller believed that he was destined to break the mold. He set out to both redefine and liberate the architecture dotting the coast. This first project home left traditional style expectations behind and elaborated on the iconic bold lines of midcentury design—resulting in an eye-catching A-frame home that was unlike anything else in the area.

While not all of the locals were pleased with Geller's out-of-the-box designs, and some builders shied away from working with him, the project's happy homeowners contacted *The New York Times*



**THE FRANK HOUSE**, on Fire Island, was designed after the Mayan ruins.

"There were wide decks on three sides of the house; Geller included a catwalk that crossed the open living area, penetrated the all-glass facade and then cantilevered twelve feet out from the front of the house like a pulpit," Alastair writes.

PHOTOGRAPH BY WERNER WOLFF



and Geller received lavish attention for his bold work. Between 1958 and 1961 he completed more than fifteen homes in his spare time.

## Surprise Arrangements

Many of these unique projects took place on Fire Island, off of Long Island's Southern shore, where the building codes didn't require Geller to turn in all of his design plans. For one such home, Geller presented "what looked like a conventional arrangement—a long, narrow rectangle—and the building department gave its approval. They had no idea it would end up being such an unusual structure," Alastair writes.

Geller ultimately ended up building what resembled an elongated box turned on edge. As unique as this aesthetic appeared, the shape was not without purpose. Geller believed that this design would actually be beneficial in hurricanes.

"[Geller] had a theory that you could protect the house by turning it into an aerodynamic object with its leading edge pointed toward the ocean so that gale-force winds would blow under and over its sloping walls," Alastair writes.

## Gellar's Rules of Design

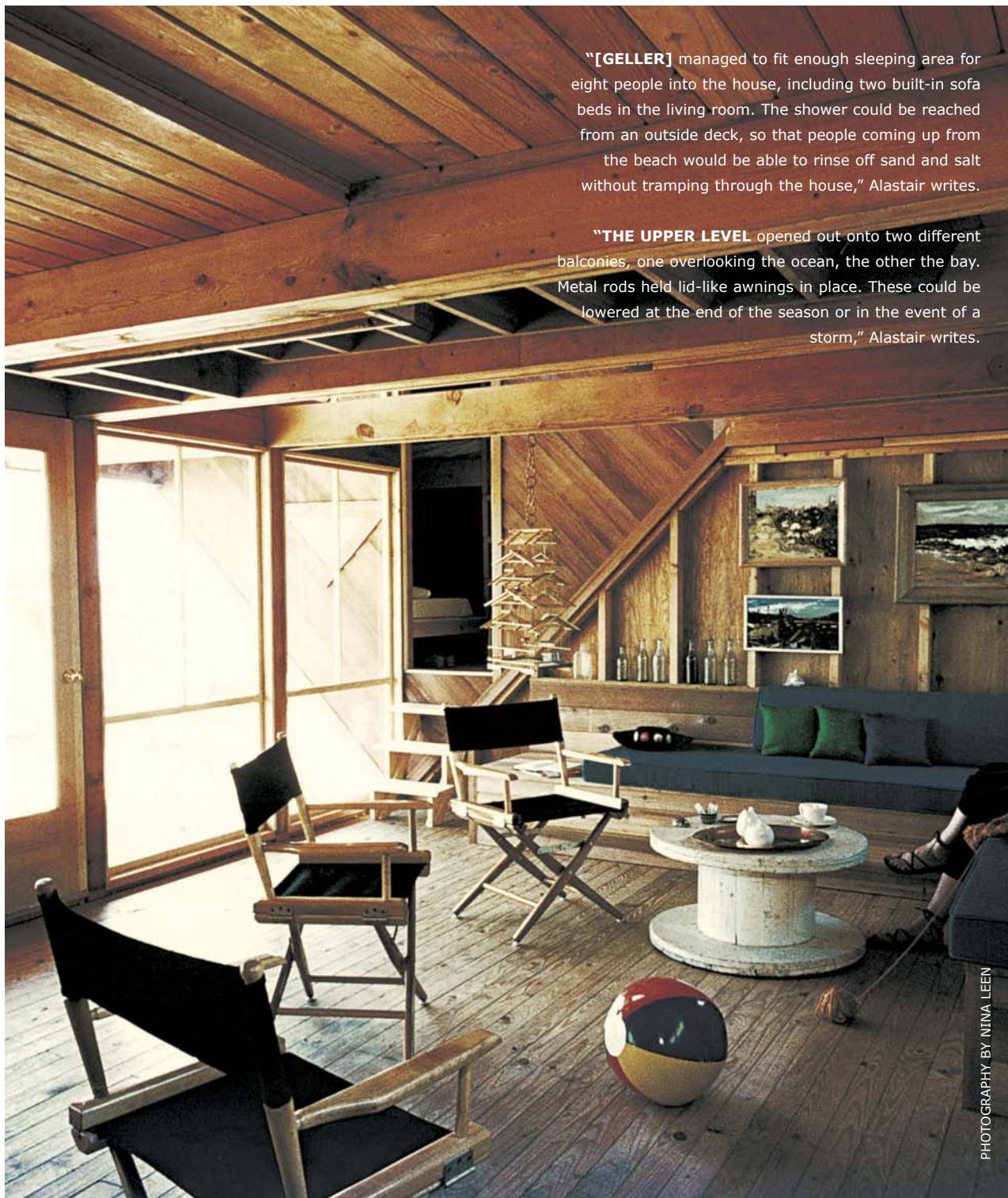
Before Geller passed away in 2011, Alastair met with the legendary designer to track down some of his iconic creations. "Bigger isn't always better. Most of these new houses are ridiculously oversized for their lots, too close together," Geller said.

According to Geller, design must always leave room for a relationship between the house and the property. "You should only use 20 percent of the building lot, but within that area, be as unpredictable as possible."

Known to many in the architectural business as a "wild man with a T-square," Geller's designs consistently

**The Reese home left traditional expectations behind and elaborated on the bold lines of midcentury design.**

**THE LEONARD JOSSEL HOUSE**, which could be described as a large open studio loft, was built in 1960 for a graphic designer and artist who wanted a place to paint while living at the beach. "The idea was to get every room facing the ocean, so I came up with this elongated rectangular structure that rode the crest of the dune," Geller said.



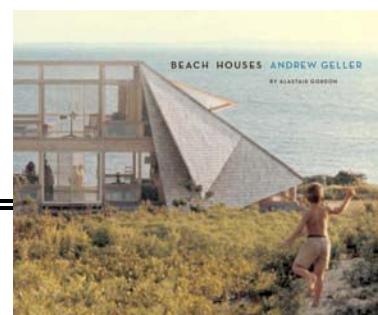
PHOTOGRAPHY BY NINA LEEN

"[GELLER] managed to fit enough sleeping area for eight people into the house, including two built-in sofa beds in the living room. The shower could be reached from an outside deck, so that people coming up from the beach would be able to rinse off sand and salt without tramping through the house," Alastair writes.

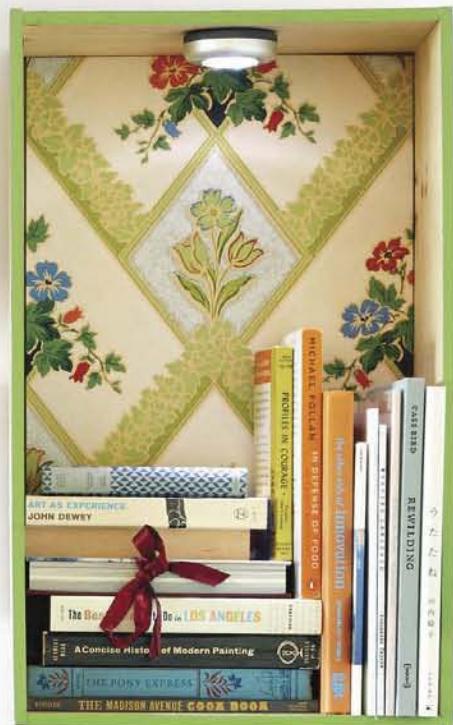
"THE UPPER LEVEL opened out onto two different balconies, one overlooking the ocean, the other the bay. Metal rods held lid-like awnings in place. These could be lowered at the end of the season or in the event of a storm," Alastair writes.

looked just as unpredictable as they did achievable. "Geller made his career rebelling against conventional house forms, attacking both the traditional pitched-roof pile as well as the flat-roofed modernist box," Alastair writes. A journalist once described Geller's work as "un-squaring the cube." Alastair credits this to Geller's way of taking the box and "subverting it in every imaginable way by tilting it on edge, skewing it, or crushing it altogether." \*

**Beach Houses: Andrew Geller**  
by Alastair Gordon, published by Princeton Architectural Press,  
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decorate



# read all about it

THINK OUTSIDE THE SHELF WITH THESE DISPLAYS OF BOOKISH BEAUTY.

BY JICKIE TORRES

PHOTOGRAPHY BY THAYER ALLYSON GOWDY



### BOOKSHELVES COME IN ALL

**SHAPES** and sizes. Here, old boxes trimmed in paint and embellished with pattern paper function as wall cubbies—blurring the lines between art and storage.



**F THE HUNTER-GATHERER IN YOU HAS LEFT YOU WITH MORE BOOKS THAN YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH, HERE'S YOUR SOLUTION:**

Turn your tomes into a working part of your décor, rather than just something to work around. In her new book *Novel Living: Collecting, Decorating and Crafting with Books*, author Lisa Occhipinti explores ways to use books as muses for clever and interesting décor elements rather than staid objects to be shelved away. Step-by-step instructions for a host of clever book-themed crafts ensure that readers can easily turn her ideas into DIY conversation pieces.

From repurposing pages to making your own unique bookcases that are more “wow” than wallflower, the book is just bursting with inspirational ideas. “There’s no denying the role books have as aesthetic objects; even when their covers are closed, they visually engage us,” Lisa writes.

The artist-turned author has worked with books as a medium for her art for years, but this book, a love letter to the printed page, explores ways to collect, preserve and use books as materials for living with what you love. Turn the page for our favorite ideas.

**BELOVED BOOK COVERS** saved from dilapidated books become a mobile when strung together and hung from the ceiling. The eye-catching piece also functions as a room divider.



**A BOOKSHELF AS A ROOM SEPARATOR** brings your collection up-front and center. Create visual interest by arranging your books a variety of ways and balancing and breaking up space with blank spots and decorative objects.



**Novel Living:**  
*Collecting, Decorating  
 and Crafting with  
 Books* by Lisa Occhipinti,  
 published by Stewart,  
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**LISA'S TUTORIAL** for her sling books adds a fun and quirky way for you to highlight all of your favorite hardbacks.

## Arrange Books Like You Paint Pictures.

Don't be square when you organize your bookshelves. Put your books in color order for a dramatic display, or place them cover-forward so that each stands alone as a work of art. When you are placing your books, step back and look at the shelf as a whole—create breaks with objects or art or set some books on their sides, some stacked and some in size order. You want your bookshelves to look like curated displays, not clutter bombs.

## Go Off the Shelf.

From ladders-turned-bookcases to crates hung on the wall for modular book cubbies, Occhipinti reminds readers to always get creative with their materials. Figure out ways to include books that incorporate your style, rather than fight against it.

## Turn the Page.

Salvage falling-apart books by looking at their pages as fodder for various crafts and décor projects. From a book-cover bunting garland to a patchwork headboard made of colorful book covers and spines, the options are just as endless as the colors and patterns you find in print.

## Use Books Everywhere.

The simplest lesson, and perhaps the easiest, is to use your books in every room. From platforms for display to elevations for candles, lamps or art, use your books as everyday materials. Create a vignette of your favorite passions to adorn your nightstand, or place a stack in the center of the dining table for an eclectic centerpiece. \*



### THE WRITING'S ON THE WALL

with this clever way to capture a person's portrait. Use a page from your loved one's favorite book to make them into a classic silhouette.

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this ladder is a charming and budget-friendly storage solution.



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For more on Antonio Zaninovic Architecture Studio, visit antoniozaninovic.com.

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## MIX & MATCH

Page 104

**Red-and-white striped chair, blue pillow:**

Rumrunner Home, (631) 287-0583 or [rumrunnerhome.com](http://rumrunnerhome.com).

**Teal-print bed linens, pink-print towel:**

Roberta Freymann, visit [robertafreymann.com](http://robertafreymann.com).

**White fur pillow, colored throws:**

Calypso Home, (212) 925-6200 or [calypsostbarth.com](http://calypsostbarth.com).

**Bath soaps:** Claus Porto, visit [clausporto.com](http://clausporto.com)

**Flowers:** Amagansett Flowers by Beth, visit [flowersbybeth.com](http://flowersbybeth.com).

**Oven/range:** Antique Stove Heaven, visit [antiquestoveheaven.com](http://antiquestoveheaven.com).

**Saarinen kitchen table, Le Corbusier**

**chaise in master bedroom:** Design

Within Reach, (800) 944-2233 or [dwr.com](http://dwr.com).

**Kitchen chairs, dining-room chairs:**

Cherner, visit [chernerchair.com](http://chernerchair.com).

**Fur throws on green and yellow vinyl**

**couches, fur carpet in master bedroom:**

Ikea, visit [ikea.com](http://ikea.com).

**Fur throw on white couch:** Sheepskin by

Bowron, visit [bowron.com](http://bowron.com).

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# THE fresh APPROACH



MAKE YOUR ROOMS "ALL ABOUT YOU" WITH A MIX OF OLD AND NEW.

**W**HY DOES MIDCENTURY MODERN STILL HOLD SUCH FERVENT APPEAL TODAY? Because the simple lines, curated details and sleek colors work so well with a variety of styles, from bohemian to contemporary. Artist and designer Trish Grantham's Portland bungalow is filled with an assemblage of flea market finds, artisan-made wares and her favorite looks from the '50s and '60s. "Pieces from every decade really

make things look more real and more comfortable than if you get everything from one store," she says.

How do you combine eras in a way that's exciting and fresh rather than junky? Keep a strong color palette to help unify your collection. Choose simple silhouettes for the larger pieces in the room. Then edit well, and if something doesn't work, don't be afraid to donate it back to the vintage community.



